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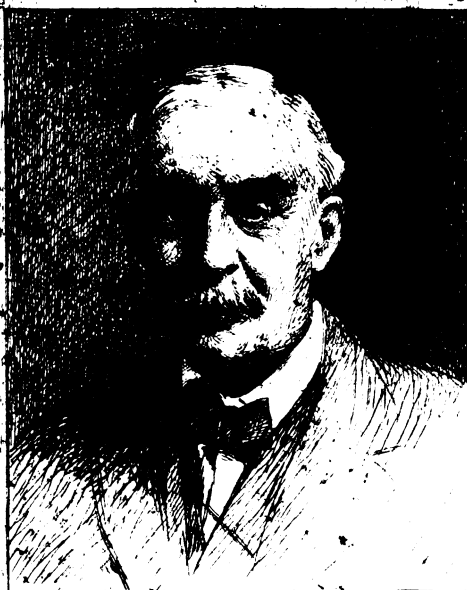
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THE MORALITY OF NATIONS

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THE MORALITY OF NATIONS

*A STUDY IN THE EVOLUTION OF
ETHICS*

BY

HUGH TAYLOR



LONDON

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH & CO., 1, PATERNOSTER SQUARE

1888



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PREFACE.



IT is with much diffidence that this work is presented to the scientific world. Yet the author is sustained by the conviction that no inquiry into the course of nature can be without its value, if only it has been conducted with patience and honesty. When this is the case, there is some hope that a part of the truth at least may have been ascertained and may survive in spite of defects of presentation.

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THE MORALITY OF NATIONS.



CHAPTER I.

THE EDUCATIONAL AND THE EVOLUTIONAL STAND- POINT IN MORALS.

THE discrepancies which pervade the conclusions of those who have at various times attempted to found moral systems, are the subject of lament by each successive thinker who begins the problem anew. Putting aside the question whether the attempt to explain the ultimate nature of virtue and happiness, or of the moral sense, and so forth, be not in reality a tampering with a premature psychology which exact science is bound to avoid, it appears plain that in so far as moral science regards as its subject-matter what ought to be rather than what is, and deals with ideal rather than actual relations, it cannot without some violence to the accepted sense of the term be called a science. It is the glory of modern thought to have abandoned the imaginative speculations of the ancients for the sure basis of observed

fact, yet there are able thinkers who, while jealously desirous that moral researches should be dignified by the name of science, yet professedly open their inquiry with the statement that this science deals not so much with observed fact as with ideal relations.

On this point John Stuart Mill is clear and distinct ("Logic," book vi. ch. xii.) where he speaks of "the branches of knowledge called moral, which are sciences in the only proper sense of the term—that is, inquiries into the course of nature. It is customary, however, to include under the term moral knowledge, and even (though improperly) under that of moral science, an inquiry the results of which do not express themselves in the indicative, but in the imperative mood, or in periphrases equivalent to it; what is called the knowledge of duties, practical ethics, or morality." In the remainder of the chapter he shows clearly the distinction between a science and its corresponding art; but, like many others, his intellectual perception of the errors made in certain inquiries is insufficient to guard him from similar confusion. Is the "Utilitarianism," which he calls "a theory of the foundations of morality," a scientific treatise, or a handbook for the guidance of conduct? It is both; and even Mill's clear recognition of the difficulty could not preserve him from the error of the age in which he lived, nor help him to take up moral science beyond the point at which his predecessors left it.

Again, Mr. Sidgwick ("Methods of Ethics," ch. v. sect. 6) has admitted that to treat at one and the same

time of the ideal and the actual in moral relations is to confound the separate domains of science and art, and that "a more complete detachment of the scientific study of right conduct from its practical application" is desirable. Yet even this admission, though valuable, is but a half-statement of the requirements of the case, and admirably epitomizes the shortcomings of moral science. For it is not only "the scientific study of right conduct" and its detachment which is necessary, but also a scientific study of wrong conduct. Even if the separate scientific study of right conduct were carried out, it would not even then be properly constituted as a science, unless, indeed, exceptional and abnormal relations are to take the precedence of normal; for it is nothing less than this to take what we call right conduct as the subject-matter of ethics, and to put wrong conduct entirely on one side as "aberration of the moral sense," or as a mass of inconsistency which it is hopeless to reduce to rule. If we must postulate a judicial standard, it is the causes of wrong conduct rather than the motives of right conduct which are the proper subject of inquiry. The science of ethics, rightly so called, must take all human conduct as its subject-matter, and the separation which has been effected between so-called moral science and all other branches of human inquiry is a necessary psychological result which takes place when man makes himself his own subject of inquiry. For the disturbing element in sociological and other inquiries concerning the actions of men is the lingering fiction of free-will,

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which causes men, when studying the laws of their own conduct, to make use of a different method from that adopted in any other branch of science, and to pass at once from an imperfect study of the indicative to a laborious inculcation of the imperative. Whatever be the final end and justification of moral inquiry, and it cannot be denied that we finally wish to regulate conduct, yet this is no reason why, in our eagerness to benefit mankind, we should overshoot the mark, and straightway endeavour to ascertain what ought to be and why it ought to be, rather than what is and how it is.

Perhaps it will be answered that the conception of ethics as the study of right conduct obviously implies the idea of wrong conduct, and that, consequently, wrong conduct receives due attention by a continual comparison with the rule of right. Though this is to a certain extent true, yet such a merely incidental treatment of wrong conduct is hopelessly inadequate. It would be far enough from basing their science on observed fact, did moralists confine their attention to the best living men. But this is not all. The most exalted lives, ideal as well as actual, are used for the purpose of discovering the rule of right that will square with them, and are thus made the subject of special attention, to the exclusion of the general moral phenomena of the world.

A gulf is thus created between the method of moral and other sciences, not merely by studying phenomena which are in a complete minority, but by studying

phenomena which, so to speak, do not exist at all, except as the ideal creations of the mind. For the study of right conduct is simply the study of the conduct of the ideally best man under all possible circumstances, conditions which the actually best is very far from realizing.

The initial error which has vitiated the conclusions of the moral systems up to the present day, is the attempt to study actions as phenomena of individual conduct. With regard to psychology, Mr. Buckle, in his "History of Civilization," has rightly argued that it is impossible to formulate the laws of the human mind by a study of the individual intellect. A similar position is much more easily tenable with regard to the moral side of intellectual operations. The barren results of ethical study are in themselves sufficient to discredit the method that has so far been pursued. But it is also very apparent that if this criticism is valid as against the intellectual side of mental laws, it can be urged with infinitely greater effect against a similar study of the moral side, inasmuch as the very conception of morality involves the conception of human relations. As intellectual laws are concerned with judgments of truth and falsehood, an individual can be conceived as exercising this faculty upon propositions having no relation to other individuals; but the moral faculty is concerned with the reciprocal actions of human beings, and morality can have no meaning apart from the relations of living beings to one another.

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To assume, then, that moral laws are discoverable by a study of the individual mind such as we find it in an advanced society, is to assume that the complex phenomenon can be satisfactorily explained without a glance at its history—is, in fact, to cut ourselves adrift from evolutionary antecedents and the light they throw upon the moral phenomena of the civilized world. Again, to assume that what are called the moral diversities and anomalies exhibited by mankind merely form the negative side of moral science, and are not a valuable subject of study on their own account, is to proceed as if moral obliquity were the exception rather than the rule—were, in fact, a mere side issue rather than the main question.

Finally, even if it be admitted that the end of moral science (or rather art) be to supply a rule of conduct, it would not be very unwarrantable to hope that the study of the general moral phenomena of the world, being in accordance with the methods of other sciences, would lead to greater success than has as yet resulted from present methods. The attempt to discover what ought to be, and to lay down rules for the attainment of an ideal standard, is calculated to be barren and unproductive in the absence of any thorough investigation of what is. To endeavour to constitute a theory of the ideal possible, previously to a proper study of the existing actual, is likely to result either in a faulty induction from insufficiently observed facts, or in a premature deduction from insufficiently ascertained principles.

But the fact is that the moralist, if he wish to raise his science to the level and dignity of the rest, is not only released from any obligation to keep the ends of practical morality in view, but is imperatively constrained to keep them out of view if he would escape the snare which has misled so many. We have been taught by Comte that human phenomena are the last to be reduced to scientific rule, and are now believed to be, as all the domains over which science now rules were at one time before them, the sphere of arbitrary human or divine interference, and not of scientific law. It is the remnant of this belief unconsciously acting upon ethics that has reinforced the free-will attitude, and obscured the proper study of moral phenomena, rather than any mere confusion between the domains of science and art; or, to state the case in another way, the spheres of science and art are confused in moral study because of the belief that all immorality is but insufficiency of individual effort. But until the moralist leaves individual effort on one side, and treats of human action as proceeding, like any other set of phenomena, according to definite and discoverable laws, moral science will never emerge from the confusion in which for ages it has been enveloped.

The present inquiry, then, as its aim is to study the actual rather than the ideal, and as it only postulates ideal conduct, in common with the rest of the world as a standard of measurement, will, if the former view of the function of moral science be adopted, be classed as

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sociological rather than ethical, though the propriety of anything more than a merely formal separation between these two branches of science is by implication denied. If sociology is the whole science of society, then ethics will form a subordinate branch of sociology, setting aside and studying as a separate department the branch of phenomena called moral. Morality will accordingly be regarded as an abstract expression of the relation of human beings to one another, and if the fundamental theory on which sociology is based, that all facts have their meaning, be not at fault, then even moral aberrations as they are called, confused as they may seem, should admit of systematization. The phenomena of human conduct have necessarily an importance corresponding to their generality, and the attribute of greater generality must be assigned to the "aberrations" as compared with right conduct. That set of laws which is observed to regulate the relation of human beings to one another, or rather those sets of laws which regulate the evolution of morals, are regarded as the only safe basis on which to build the ideal laws which we would impose upon society, did we wish to bring about the greatest individual harmony.

But it may be objected that this method postulates a standard of right and wrong without giving any explanation of what constitutes the difference between right and wrong, and that a system which takes exception to the method of interrogating the individual consciousness and extracting therefrom rules whereby

to judge the conduct of mankind, cannot consistently find any difference in different kinds of conduct. The answer will be that it is part of the sociologist's prerogative to avail himself of the general decisions of mankind in matters affecting their own conduct, and to use such decisions as having, by the very fact of their existence, a validity entitling them to use. Besides, the deep mystery which is supposed to envelop the "ought" of moral science is a legacy of the metaphysical treatment of moral questions, and, like other metaphysical subtleties, is under modern treatment in the process of dissipation. In the theological stage the "ought," as the simple command of the deity, is intelligible enough. It is when it leaves this stage, and assumes a form befitting a more speculative age, that the complication begins. But with the doctrine of evolution there is no more need for this mystery. Concerned, like other sciences, with laws of change, moral science, from a necessity of the human constitution, adds another conception, that of change for the better, which all understand similarly in the general relations of mankind, however differently they may define it in theory. Life is devoid of meaning unless its more or less definite and final object be some sort of happiness. In accordance with this attitude, the history of mankind may, for the purposes of moral investigation, be regarded as a species of progress in the direction of happiness, not necessarily conscious, for the elements of mere sensation imply some such movement. It is because the laws of moral

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change are necessarily regarded as tending or not tending in a desired direction that moral science, or more properly art, sometimes deals with an "ought" while physical science deals with an "is." In other words, the "ought to be" of moral science is merely the ideal "is to be," or "is to be" coupled with a wish that it may be. From the study of the past direction that human nature has taken, we anticipate, on the same fundamental principle of uniformity which dominates other sciences, the direction which it may, or, if we are very sanguine, which it will, take in the future, and according as that direction is in conformity to our wishes, by the use of the "ought," or categorical imperative, we endeavour to hasten, as far as in us lies, the approach of the desirable end. It is this fact in every individual consciousness of the conception of a possible happiness greater than that which the world enjoys, which has caused so many moralists to treat moral science as a set of rules for the attainment of an ideal state rather than as an inquiry into the past, present, and future conditions of human progress in the direction of happiness. If, then, men in the present day are found with certain notions of right and wrong, unable, most of them, to give any very intelligible account of how they came there, it does not by any means follow that those ideas are innate or incapable of analysis. The evolutionist may accept the fact, and may ascribe just as great validity and imperative-ness to the dictates of conscience as another without being thereby bound to maintain the belief in a final and

impenetrable mystery. Nothing exists without a history and a meaning, but the fact that that history can be traced down to less complex beginnings, while diminishing the mystery as to origin, does not lessen the present authority of any given feeling ; it is not the less a feeling on that account.

It has already been stated that the backwardness of moral science is due to the fact that its data are not studies as are the data of other sciences. Moral phenomena are not properly studied, because of the adhesion to the belief that morality is the subject of individual control, and that to trace morality to general causes is to undermine individual responsibility and to inculcate fatalism. This is simply the reappearance of the free-will and necessitarian controversy. But so long as science represents truth, no more in morals than in any other study has it anything to do with consequences, even if they were vicious in their tendency. That they are vicious in the present instance may be blankly denied. Morality has survived, one after another, the countless shocks which have been inflicted on timid minds by bold inquirers, all of whom have in their turn been denounced as the subverters of morality, and it will survive even the disbelief in a sole personal initiative, and the attribution of moral action to general causes, since those general causes will still be in operation. Were morality indeed dependent on the individual, then any blow dealt to individual self-sufficiency might be fatal. But to argue that to show morality to be dependent on causes outside

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the individual is subversive of morality, is simply to beg the question under discussion by assuming morality to be dependent on the individual. Otherwise general causes will be general causes still, and act independently of a belief or disbelief in their existence. But it is necessary to examine more closely the peculiar form which the doctrine of evolution has given to the old controversy between free-will and necessity.

The view of the case just suggested is the result of confusion consequent upon the double attitude from which moral science, differing in this respect from all other sciences, can be viewed. The difficulty is not only created by the fact that there is at once an art and a science of morality, but also by the fact that those very phenomena which the science regards as ruled by general laws, the art regards as modifiable by injunctions. We are, as human beings, under the necessity both of studying human beings as they are, as exhibiting phenomena capable of scientific expression, and also of wishing them different, and doing what in our power lies to render them different, in order to secure increased harmony. The educational and scientific views of morality come into conflict. The art of morality is under the necessity of believing actions and character more easily modifiable than the study of morality would warrant. Plato's "glorious falsehood" is a necessity of all education. The material of childhood is amenable to a different discipline from that of the grown world. In the world men move under the influence of certain steady, well-

defined influences, from which the young can to a certain extent be shielded, and we are enabled to place the modifiable nature of the child under conditions artificially adapted for securing that character most desirable for the happiness and harmony of the world. We are educated, if we are rightly educated, not to ensure our individual success in life, but in order to advance the morality of the world. Moral science proper deals with the movements of the actual world which represent fact ; educational morality moves chiefly under artificial conditions representing, not fact, but ideal fiction. The whole course of education consists in endeavouring to uphold before the eyes of the young a theory of morality which is known in reality to be too rigid and unbending to stand the test of real life, but by the early inculcation of which it is hoped to lay a basis of moral principle, ere the storms of life can seriously disturb the work : a foundation strong enough eventually to weather both the tempest of individual passion and the ceaseless, wearying beat of the tide of human ill. For this end, to implant a belief in the absolute nature of right and wrong is believed to be a necessary course, and a large part of the aversion with which the world views any attempt to introduce the conception of law into moral phenomena is due to the fact that the belief in the absolute nature of right and wrong, and consequently in the personal obligation of men to pursue the right, is thought to be undermined. The empire of the passions is so to be dreaded in the young that, unless they are possessed

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with a belief in their perfect ability to resist them, self-indulgence and idleness would destroy the coming generation.

The necessities of education involve a contradiction between fact and that view of it which we present to the world. All rational persons are compelled to believe that in certain cases hereditary disposition and circumstance have put it out of the power of certain individuals to lead moral lives, yet the main object in such a case must be to hide from the individual our belief that his misconduct is the result of anything else than a persistent refusal to exercise his free-will to do right. To admit the plea of hereditary disposition would be to add the strongest incentive to a continuance in a wrongful course.

It is pertinently, and yet from another point of view irrelevantly, asked why some countries laboriously train their young in the paths of virtue, if they are afterwards to admit the principle of the state regulation of vice. The adoption of both the one and the other course is an illustration of the principle here maintained. While doing the utmost in their power to lay the foundation of moral principle so as to be superior to circumstance, they are yet compelled to admit the insufficiency of their efforts, and to provide an outlet for a passion which would else threaten at the very foundations of society. Similarly with reference to the principles of unswerving honesty which are instilled in childhood and youth, to be afterwards tacitly or openly set aside by

the unwritten laws of commercial and professional morality. In either case the ideal aspiration of the preceptor, if indeed a real hope of its fulfilment be ever indulged, is doomed to disappointment. The general causes affecting the life of the community are such as to cause the early principles of education to be set aside, if not entirely subverted, whenever sufficient occasion shall arise.

The error of endeavouring to build up a moral system from the point of view of the individual has been already pointed out. Hand-in-hand with this error goes another, partly due to this misconception of the proper standpoint, and partly the result of an absurd view of the necessities of philosophic method. This is the assumption tacitly made, that a uniformity of moral principle pervades the conduct of mankind—that is, of each individual man. Each individual being regarded as a moral centre, philosophic method requires that he should be equipped with some central moral principle, round which his thoughts and actions may duly revolve. And this assumption involves the belief, not only that his character, whether good or bad, is on the whole harmonious, which we know to be the fact, but also the belief that the moral principle (if any) which guides his actions in different departments of life is the same throughout, which is very far from being the case—a notable instance of the perversion of fact caused by the study of “right conduct” and ideal rules, for a closer examination of moral phenomena would show an

opposite conclusion to be nearer the truth. It will be shown in the course of this work that the morality of the average man habitually differs in different departments of life, and it is with the average and not with the exceptional man that a sociological morality is chiefly concerned. The exceptional man, the nearest approach to the ideal rule, points out the goal to which the world, evolutionally speaking, is tending; is an earnest of the capabilities of nature, and a measure of the moral deficiencies of the rest of mankind. But from the exceptional man sociological ethics cannot formulate the law which guides those so far behind him in evolution. We readily grant that the nearer a man approaches moral perfection, the more he acts from conscious principle and the less he is at the mercy of his surroundings—a recognition of which truth gives our vigorous connotation to the word “unprincipled.” But it is precisely through the endeavour to explain morality from the point of view of the best possible man—from the ideal standpoint, in other words—that the mistake has arisen. The average of mankind are all very far from the highest moral example amongst them, and to judge them by the exceptionally moral man, and to assume that their morality, like his, is the result of a single moral aim, whether it be conscience, or utility, or the like, is to sacrifice the end to secure philosophic simplicity of means.

This error is contained in the very definition of the ordinary method of moral science. As a rule, moral

treatises begin with the avowed purpose of discovering the end of right action, either under the form of the *summum bonum*, or in answer to the questions, What are the sanctions of morality? Why should I be moral?

Had any satisfactory answer been propounded to these apparently simple questions, the moralist might be tempted to continue the inquiry in the same form. But none of the schemes propounded have had more than a limited following, or been found to explain more than a limited portion of the moral phenomena of mankind. But with a change of method the effort may still be sustained.

In such methods of stating the problem which moral science proposes to itself, is contained that implication which has been criticized as inconsistent with fact—the implication, namely, that the conduct of a given individual is from a moral point of view uniform; or, in other words, such a definition of the moral problem denies by implication that the estimate of moral action differs with moral circumstance, a truth the deep significance of which cannot as yet be fully explained. Probably it is this change of moral estimate which has blinded moralists to the fact which is otherwise obvious enough. For when the moral estimate of a certain section of men changes with regard to a certain act, it first of all blinds men as to the real nature of the act they are committing, and, secondly, blinds moralists as to the fact that the moral estimate has changed, and has changed because it has a necessary relation to the feelings

of the body of human beings from whom it proceeds. Further, such forms of statement beg the question as to the method to be pursued in moral science in another way. To say that men do right because of such and such motives is to imply that in doing right they always act consciously and rationally—is to imply that an intellectual impulse prompts the action and sustains them in it. Neither of these conditions need necessarily be true. Even if it were universally true among the higher types of civilization, which it is not, it is very apparently untrue as we descend in the scale of humanity. Right action is in the generality of cases as impulsive and unreasoning as wrong action seems to be, and to submit all right action to the test of such a proposition is unwarrantably to limit the field of inquiry. For the final solution of the difficulty is not at all facilitated by the question-begging process of denying the attribute of morality to any action not done from a consciously right motive. Everywhere conscious right action merges into unconscious, and the attempt to draw a dividing line is futile.

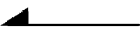
The conclusion to which we are drawn, after a comparison of the educational and the evolutionary standpoint in morals, is, then, that their respective spheres must be kept quite distinct. Confusion results on both sides if the methods are transferred. The educational assumption of free-will, if introduced into moral science, throws it into chaos; while to take the facts of actual history in order to form from them principles by which to regulate

conduct, would be disastrous in the extreme to practical morality. It is after the examination of individual and national morality that this will be more apparent. Then it will be seen beyond a doubt that the standard of international morality is low enough to justify almost any principles, if the evolutionary data be taken as warranting the educational conclusion. But obloquy has at all times descended on the head of any statesman professing a theory of international morality corresponding to what has been the habitual practice of politicians in all ages. The discrepancy between theory and practice, never wholly absent, here reaches astounding proportions. The steady refusal to draw logical conclusions in the region of morals shows how very far theoretical morality is ahead of practice, and also how inclined men are, by persistently shutting their eyes, to endeavour to retain undisturbed the visions of a flattering self-esteem. Properly to solve this question, account must be taken of the benefit that may result from self-deception in the matter of conduct.

The prevailing opinion seems to be, that benefit may result not only from professing a higher ideal than can possibly be realized in conduct, but from pretending that such an ideal actually is realized in conduct. Certainly vice may pay its homage to virtue in the form of hypocrisy, and we rejoice that such deference can be extorted ; but there is nothing ennobling in the aspect of virtue so self-complacent as to deny the existence of vice.

But there is a further reason for the attitude in a kind of vague feeling that, if immoral conduct must be recognized as existing, the admission shall not be so general as to raise the question from the region of isolated fact to that of generality. To openly profess a lower morality, as well as to follow one, seems to add a degree to wickedness, raising it from the category of acknowledged error into a system which dethrones the majesty of right, and substitutes some other principle of action. Fortunately, there is on record an actual instance of the contradiction we have been discussing, wherein both the habitually immoral nature of certain acts in certain departments of life and the indignation of the world at the attempt to frame a moral code by generalization from such acts is simultaneously exemplified.

Machiavelli's Prince has become a byword of daring iniquity, not because of the attempt to face the truth, which is honest and commendable enough, but because of the attempt to found on historical data a science of political action. The one prominent feature of this work, to which its critics appear to have been wilfully blind, and which is absolutely unnoticed in the conventional justification which Macaulay is good enough to make out for the author, a feature, too, which is expressly mentioned by Machiavelli in the preface as the key-note of the book, and insisted upon in almost every subsequent page, is this, that the precepts contained in "The Prince" are a simple generalization from the facts of history. With a minuteness and care which



satisfied Bacon himself, he verifies his precepts by the example of some well-known historical personage. Finally, if a question can be raised as to the propriety of his means, his end is as purely patriotic as was ever conceived. The means which throughout history he shows to have been habitually adopted in similar relations with successful results, though without like justification, he begs Lorenzo in touching language to adopt in order to redeem his country "from the cruelty and insolence of barbarians," and to "vindicate it from the oppression of strangers." It needs but a glance to see that Machiavelli is right in his data, and that an effectual criticism must impugn the justice of taking a moral precedent from the average action of mankind before it can hold him up to the scorn of the world.

It is precisely at this point that there is a separation between moral science, as properly, and moral science, or rather art, as ordinarily conceived. It is not merely that one assumes the indicative, the other the imperative mood. But, as has been said, by moral science proper human action is regarded as subject to laws as inevitable as those of any other department of science, while in forming a practical moral system the moral benefit of mankind is the object, and appeals are made as to free agents. The domain of human action is now very generally admitted by thinkers to be the region of law, and many also find that they can personally dispense with the theory of free-will and live; but for the great majority of mankind it is probably a necessary fiction.

There is, however, contained in the question an implication which, though capable of rational explanation, is valuable for the intuitionists. The refusal to admit sociological data as affording a basis for action when such data would warrant wrong action, carries with it the important assumption, implicit in all moral reasoning, that the instinctive sense of mankind is violated by the elevation into a system of anything that would warrant less than the highest conceivable code of morality. And here begins the confusion. For though a theory of practical morality must be made to satisfy the requirements of educationalists and philosophers, yet the actions of mankind are not regulated by theories of morality, but are the outcome of social conditions.

At the same time the aim is the same for all—for the humble regenerator in the lowliest walks of life ; for the enthusiast who seeks to fire mankind with lofty ideals ; for the scientific mind that carefully examines its data before drawing its conclusions—namely, to raise the individual above social conditions, and arm him with a resolution that shall know and follow its right purpose everywhere. Though morality as here conceived is the product of certain natural laws and social combinations, and is, on a wide survey, dependent on social causes, yet it does not necessarily follow that when once the idea of moral truth has been raised, morality cannot, in individual instances, rise beyond the general level which the general causes of a given period necessitate. On the

contrary, man has a reasoning faculty which at times enables him to rise superior to his surroundings. The objects which supply the data of moral science are not inanimate ; they are, as it were, part of their own cause and part of their own law. By reflecting on moral processes the mind of man is capable of constructing ideal principles from the imperfect actual around him, and returns with these principles to modify that actual more in accordance with ideal requirements.

It is part of the phenomena of evolutionary morality that men are born, here and there, capable, by virtue of reflection and abnormal instinct, of effecting in the general theory of morality, in the practice of their own lives and of a few others, an advance which but for this special cause would have required generations for its production. Whereas an educational morality takes its stand on the highest point reached in these sudden outbursts, and regards all action as an approximation to or a falling away from this point, a sociological morality is justified in withdrawing attention from these isolated cases, because it is very clearly apparent that such attempts after a higher moral level fail hopelessly in accelerating the average rate of improvement, on account of the attempt to substitute a weaker special in the place of stronger general moral causes. It is not the theory which sets the practice of morality to work in the general conduct of the world, but the practice which eventually gives rise to improved theory. It is from studying actual phenomena that the sociologist sees the

failure alike of theory and religion to affect any change in the general course of the world's movement, and is hence led to infer the operation of other causes than the hope of heaven, conformity to a moral law, or the reasoned and conscious pursuit of happiness itself.

CHAPTER II.

THE LAW OF ANTAGONISM.

THE main points of the departure from previous methods of approaching moral questions may now be briefly summed up. If the fundamental teaching of sociology be not at fault, then the actions of men will present certain uniformities capable of being stated in the same manner as the laws or uniformities of other orders of phenomena. Moral phenomena must be taken in their entirety, without any predilection in favour of certain forms of answer which they may be made to yield ; the form of the answer must not be once for all determined beforehand. Further, the habit of giving certain forms of conduct the preference of undisturbed attention, a habit which is the result of the educational necessity of fixing exclusive attention upon the forms of conduct called right, must be as far as possible laid aside, and all phenomena of conduct must be allowed their weight and due influence in forming conclusions which are to be applicable to all mankind. Still less must we seek for the individual counterpart of the typical perfection of later ages of moral evolution in all

past time. For, in the first place, individual morality is the result of changes which must themselves be traced, and to which their product can give but a doubtful clue ; is, in fact, the result of the compound influence of mind upon mind and individuality upon individuality. And, in the second place, this method of starting from the individual is fatally misleading, because one of the most prominent facts in evolutionary morality is that the individual does not act as an individual, but as a unit of a larger body ; a fact which renders the supposed uniformity of individual moral principle an unwarrantable assumption, since the morality of the individual will be found to change in proportion as he is equipped with abstract principle, or a mere unit, taking his moral tone from the rest of the body of which he forms a part. Again, if phenomena are to rank in importance according to their generality, wrong conduct will take the precedence of right conduct rather than the reverse ; while finally, morality, being regarded as a product of human relations, cannot profitably be studied out of connection with those relations. For if sufficient account be taken of the influence upon a given nation of the effect produced by the study of the morality of other nations, the residuum of moral phenomena will be the simple result of the moral evolution of that nation. Nor is the disturbing influence of traditional ideas of morality as great as might be expected, since these ideas are mainly brought to bear upon the individual during the period of his education, under circumstances which, as

has already been explained, are, when compared with the conditions of ordinary life, in the highest degree artificial. Consequently, the influence of previous ages can be included under the influence of education, which, when compared with the other vast influences at work, ranks as of the very least importance in the inquiry as to the causes of the present and past moral condition of man. Consequently, to trace the evolutionary history of the morality of any single nation that has given birth to a civilization, is to find out the genesis of all morality under similar conditions—is, in fact, to solve the moral problem in so far as one healthy type of nationality can be safely taken as the parallel of another. And this may be done to a large extent, seeing that to all human beings the problems of existence are fundamentally the same, though some state them in different terms, or have failed to secure their footing on the road of moral advance.

Such is the task that will fall to the lot of some moralist in a future age. All that can at present be done is to offer a preliminary sketch, which may not be without its value. And even if it appear that more is attempted than a mere sketch, yet this apparent ambition is a necessity of scientific inquiry, where division of labour is unorganized, and where individual workmen are in danger of assigning too great an importance and of imparting too elaborate a finish to their individual portions of the work, under the delusion that they are constructing not merely a branch, but the main body

of the building on which they are engaged. But the structures of science are only raised with the carefully shaped material of age after age, and until the fulness of time has come, the material for such construction is not to hand. Therefore, it may happen that the greatest genius, in aiming at the construction of the whole, may leave but a carefully shaped block to be eventually incorporated in the work of his successor. But because he has failed in the totality of his aim, his work is not, therefore, without value—a fact which subsequent generations indeed recognize, but which contemporary criticism is apt to forget. Into the logical misjoinings and interstices of the present work the lever of criticism may be inserted, and may possibly level the whole structure to the ground ; but among the ruins it is hoped that there may yet be found a fragment not unworthy of attention, or of incorporation in the scheme of some future and greater architect.

The prominent truths of the doctrine of animal evolution are the incessant mutual incompatibility of life, the struggle for existence, and, by consequence, the law of the antagonism of organisms. The struggle for existence, under its moral aspect, is antagonism. It is not likely that, in passing from the animal to the human kingdom, this great principle should suddenly have disappeared. Nor has it done so. Even without the positive teaching as to the past history of life upon the globe, it might seem that this feature was sufficiently prominent in history to justify especial attention. There

is hardly a page of an ordinary historical record which is not either mainly or exclusively occupied with the deadly struggle either of one man with another, or of some one portion of mankind with some other portion ; which does not teem with plots, conspiracies, family rivalries, deadly feuds, carried on under a thousand different pretexts, but always with the same result—the destruction of man by man. Such are the conditions of existence that not only has the good man continually to defend himself against the bad, but the noblest principles of the human mind are unable to maintain themselves, much less to spread, without involving the antagonism of men with one another. Not only has the principle of liberty at all times been compelled to fight to the death for self-maintenance, but this very principle of liberty is itself found to animate one people consistently with that people's heartless oppression of another. Religion, which at first sight might reasonably be expected to afford the world a practical illustration of its professions, and to lull the mutual hatred of mankind, has been credited by a leading moralist* with having increased rather than lessened bloodshed. Within the limits of single nations, where at least harmony might be expected, we find the ceaseless rivalry of man against man for wealth, power, influence, or even for the very means of subsistence. And when, in addition to the prominence of the fact of antagonism in history, there is forced upon us the conviction that this antagonism is but the con-

* Lecky, "History of European Morals."

tinuation in human evolution of what was the chief feature in animal evolution, the conclusion becomes irresistible that this is the central fact from which to start in a moral inquiry. The importance, too, which this fact may possibly assume in sociological and moral problems becomes at once apparent. In animal evolution, the object being merely self-preservation, the means simple force, and the method individual and isolated effort, these factors, which are simple enough, yet result, in conjunction with biological laws, in the production of marvellous physical types. But in proportion as man is intellectually higher than the animal world, in a like proportion does the subtlety and complexity of the struggle with his fellow-men increase. For the gradual development of the intellect and the growth of the emotions, impinging upon the law of antagonism pure and simple, turn and deflect it into new and various forms. It might indeed be thought that this supposed law of antagonism is a mere restatement of the law of self-preservation or self-interest, and that as such it has already been made to yield its utmost results. Yet the law of antagonism, though psychologically affiliated to the law of self-preservation, is yet perfectly distinct from it. That intellectual metathesis whereby the means comes to be valued independently of the end, and which it is so important to keep in view at the end of the moral problem, is equally conspicuous at the beginning.

Just as wealth and virtue come to be valued independently of the ends to which they are means, so

successful antagonism or power comes to have a value quite apart from self-preservation, which is its logical parent, and to rank as an independent principle in the moral history of mankind. In fact, with those men who have at all times been regarded as the most striking and admirable figures, and in all cases except those involving the crudest forms of antagonism, self-preservation has always been regarded as the least important consideration.

Yet it is quite immaterial what name be given to this principle, so long as its operation is recognized. To the principle in question we already know the physical perfection of all the organic world to be due. The addition, then, of the complex motives, emotions, and intellectual refinement of a higher organization is not calculated to simplify the results produced.

Having vindicated the importance of this principle, which as a moral factor is wholly unrecognized except in so far as it may be supposed to be embodied in the perfectionist philosophy, it is now necessary to preface that, though in one form or another co-extensive with the whole range of moral phenomena, it is necessarily only in conjunction with other principles of human nature that it is made to explain such phenomena.

Throughout the whole range of sentient existence we are indeed confronted with the one permanent feature of the antagonism of organisms. But morality implies harmony, not mutual incompatibility. From the savage conflict of brutes up to the highest moral accord of

civilized men, there must be an unbroken chain of evolution, the gradual process of which it is the business of moral science to unfold, and to make clear how out of the lowest morality has been produced the highest. Antagonism indeed accompanies this change throughout, but diminishes with advancing civilization, or rather so changes its form as to reverse its original effects, and that with the assistance of other influences. And if it seem that insufficient attention is paid to these influences, it is more from the desire to claim full recognition for what is believed to be the main evolutionary factor than from any intention of denying their value as co-operating agents. Among these the principle of utility is absolutely indispensable. Without the utilitarian philosophy moral science would be in but a sorry way, and, were it not that antagonism comes first in the order of evolution the theory of antagonism might be regarded as subsidiary to the theory of utility rather than the reverse. For it is more especially at the points when the utilitarian philosophy breaks down that the theory of antagonism will be found of value.

But, again, all the contradictions and exceptions, which meet the law of antagonism are not the result of the principle of utility, for many are found at a period when it is almost impossible to postulate utilitarian adaptation of means to ends. For all we know of nature's methods teaches us to expect that the earlier forms of morality, and even many of the later forms, must have been built up without conscious aid from

utility. At the very outset there are exceptions to the law of antagonism in parental and sexual relations. But these are by no means so great as might have been expected, for by them the law of antagonism will be found to be but temporarily suspended, resuming its sway when not under their immediate and direct influence.

Armed with this principle of antagonism, then, we are ready to examine the actual facts of history, and to see what light it throws upon them. From the historical point of view there is, indeed, no apparent reason for the absence of a well-founded science of moral evolution. As to the objection that a proper moral or sociological science cannot yet be founded on account of the want of material, such a statement is in direct contradiction to the facts of the case. There never has been, for the inauguration of any science, a richer abundance of material than lies before the student of moral evolution. Every line of an ordinary journal, every action of the casual acquaintance, every paragraph in the biographies of men, every page in the history of nations, supplies a wealth of data which wait but the magic and yet unspoken word which shall cause them to group themselves in an orderly and intelligible array. And as for the impossibility of experiment, history is one vast record of the experiments which nature has herself performed in her great human laboratory for the benefit of inquirers ; and when the necessary rearrangement has been performed, history will appear as the practical exposition of moral laws, and not, as it is now regarded, as something

distinct and apart from them. For if the science of human action is ever to be reconstituted on a basis similar to that of the other sciences—on the basis, that is, of the law of the uniformity of nature—moral philosophy as at present understood must leave off its dalliance with the false goddess of metaphysics, and come nearer the actual life of man—must compromise with its philosophic dignity, and enter more sympathetically into the actual ebb and flow of the history of the world. Not until then will moral science be rescued from its hopeless confusion with moral art.

In proceeding to an examination of the facts of history, it is the error of assuming the possibility of discovering a uniform moral principle pervading the actions of mankind, and the insufficiency of starting from the individual in order to discover that principle, which will first be exposed.

It will be found that the moral principle which is supposed to guide mankind in their approbation or detestation of certain acts is itself dependent on the relation in which men are found to stand to one another—is dependent on the mutual attitudes of the very beings whose actions it is supposed to regulate; and that, in the face of gigantic moral contradictions, moral philosophy is either silent or utters a helpless protest against a state of things implied by the course of evolution.

For this purpose it is necessary to start with an inquiry into the morality of nations, a region which, though full of moral phenomena of the deepest importance, has,

by the ethical methods which concern themselves only with the individual, been unfortunately but necessarily left altogether on one side. Any system which busies itself with the individual, and consequently starts from the interior of a nation, may or may not satisfactorily account for the phenomena within the limits of that nation, but is certainly unable to account for the phenomena of international relations, and has therefore no title to call itself an ethical science unless it offer an explanation of the moral phenomena of the whole world. And this can hardly be. For the longer the study of the problem the more apparent does it become that an examination, however close, of what falls within national limits can throw but little light on what falls outside.

CHAPTER III.

THE CONTRADICTION BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL AND
INTERNATIONAL MORALITY.

THE subject of the following chapter, the difference between national and individual morality, is not new, inasmuch as it has been before the world since the beginning of history. But so far from attracting the consideration it deserves, it has, generally speaking, either been shunned as an unintelligible anomaly, or put on one side from a confused notion that to admit a plain fact of an apparently immoral tendency is to lower morality. Accordingly the problem has remained merely the subject of sorrowful remark by poets and humanitarians. So little real consideration has been bestowed on it that to many men it would not, perhaps, readily occur that national morality is at the lowest ebb as compared with individual. Ordinary procedure, starting from rules laid down by abstract morality, would refuse to recognize any difference between the morality of a given act judged first from a national and then from an individual standpoint. But to conclude, without further investigation, from what is merely a professed moral

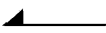
sentiment or aspiration of mankind that actual practice coincides with this aspiration, is grossly to trifle with facts ; or, again, to assume that actual practice ought to coincide, and, if it does not, to regard it as anomalous, is the result of a mere sentimental aversion to face the real truth, and results in shutting out from the scrutiny of moral science a whole class of facts invaluable in their scientific bearing, or in reducing them merely to a subordinate position as unintelligible aberrations which confuse rather than elucidate the study of morality.

There is no need to prove by an elaborate comparison the difference between national and individual morality. All that is necessary is to take some moral feature common to individuals and to nations, and to estimate the morality of the same act under two different aspects. It will then be apparent with what amazing facility the human mind can cheat itself into assigning different degrees of moral reprobation to one and the same act when seen from different points of view.

In no case does popular prejudice calmly foster side by side such incompatible and antagonistic views as it does with regard to the value of human life. The same drawing-room moralists who would have us believe that murder is a thing removed in horror from all other phenomena of crime, both by the hideousness of the attendant circumstances and the special penalty which conscience affixes, who talk so solemnly of the sanctity of human life and of the iniquity of shedding its sacred stream, are yet ready to applaud the skilful slaughter of

thousands in a national quarrel, and to offer thanks to a god of peace for the wholesale destruction of their national foes. From one point of view, to take human life is arraigned as the blackest crime ; from another, the community not only refuses to regard it as a crime, but takes anxious thought how it may be done on the largest scale and with the greatest efficiency. This practice of mankind points to the conclusion that moral laws are not binding between different geographical centres, and that the sanctity of human life is to be reckoned in an inverse ratio to the scale on which it is destroyed.

In denouncing the crime of murder it is not generally thought necessary to emphasize the antisocial results which would ensue, such as the insecurity of property, or the impossibility of united enterprise, were such a practice common. An appeal is rather made directly to the moral intuition, in the confident expectation that it will unhesitatingly condemn a crime which has been regarded with horror by all civilized communities. And it would, in fact, be the greatest anomaly to find a mind so constituted as to require an exposition of the consequences before being able to condemn the act. At the same time, it is impossible to hold that the aversion to murder is the result of an originally implanted moral intuition. For were it the destruction of life alone that revolts the moral sense, then the penalty of conscience would be equally aroused by the destruction of life in war, which it is not. We must clearly relinquish the



mystical sense of the sanctity of human life if we are to justify the popular conviction that the shedding of blood is in the one case justifiable, in the other a crime.

That there is a difference between the two acts must be allowed ; that there can be any difference on the supposition of a moral intuition is absolutely denied. The feeling can only legitimately rank as an intuition in both cases by being so carefully and provisionally worded as to destroy its validity as an intuition pure and simple.


Now, the ordinary explanation of the difficulty would, of course, be that, in the one case, we are fighting for our country ; in the other, turning our weapons treacherously against our fellow-citizens. This answer very clearly contains an implication, to which, when clearly stated, assent is not so readily gained—that we are bound by certain moral laws in our dealings with our fellow-citizens which we are not bound to observe in our dealings with individuals of a different nationality.

The first step in the explanation is comparatively simple. Human conduct, in many particulars variable and uncertain, does not commit itself to a gigantic contradiction of this nature without a reason ; which reason is simply the popular one given above in a distinction between fellow-countrymen and foes, but which is more satisfactory in the generalized form, that murder strikes at the root of all association whatever, by turning one individual against another, while war does not. Whatever other reason may be given for the different estimate

of the value of human life, there is at any rate this utilitarian consideration involved—that organization and murder are incompatible, while organization and war are not. This clearly shows that the taking of life is only reprobated when it disturbs order and renders security impossible. But this discovery has by no means solved the problem.

Nations are mutually antagonistic, while the citizens of the same state are not, and their interests are frequently incompatible, while the interests of fellow-citizens are the same. But there is no hint given, either by reason, morality, or religion, why this should be so. Abstract morality has no comment to offer upon this departure from the principles of universal brotherhood, which is the natural deduction from any of the moral theories that have been promulgated. It is left for poetry alone, probing the mysteries of existence, to lament in futile, desultory strains the iniquity of war.

War is an appeal to arms to decide an abstract question of right and wrong. But we find that individuals, except in rare cases, have given up this method of deciding their quarrels, while nations still have recourse to arms as the natural method of settling disputes. The parallel is not forced: a quarrel between individuals in barbarous times is decided by an appeal to force, and a man's prestige is in proportion to his readiness in backing his claims by violence, while to shun such an appeal as an evasion of the real difficulty is regarded, not as nobility, but cowardice. Similarly, the nation which



shows a disinclination to take up arms is regarded with contempt, and courts aggression by not resenting it. Finally, when the struggle is at an end, consideration for the real merits of the question at issue is forgotten in admiration of the victorious community. The ultimate cause which assigns a nation its place among nations is not intellectual supremacy or commerce or art, but the character of its warlike appliances and its power in using them. The question which moral science has here to resolve is, what is the real relation of morality and force, and what is the meaning of their inversion in individual and national morality respectively? For there is no reason, on the face of it, why might should so largely constitute right in national quarrels, while a similar theory among individuals is held to be indicative of the supremest injustice.

Throughout the course of evolution, whatever be the relation of might to right, might has always preceded it as the supreme arbiter between man and man. We need not carry our investigation very deep to assure ourselves that the motor-force in the struggles of different nations is no high-minded assertion of the great principles of right and wrong, which is generally the pretext on one side or the other, but merely that instinct of rivalry which throughout the history of the world has pitted man against man and nation against nation. The primary and barbaric instinct of self-preservation at the expense of others is common to nations and individuals alike, and only differs in the form of its manifestation.

Between nations it slaughters its thousands in a methodized and scientific fashion, while, though less ostentatiously, it is, with modifications, no less surely operative in the never-ceasing turmoil of individual life. The difference is that in individual life a limit is placed to the use of means by which superiority may be asserted, a limit which at least forbids the open and violent destruction of life ; in the decision of national superiority there is no such limit, but the struggle is to the death. Justice is not a consideration, or at least is subordinate to the power of arms.

The substitution of a principle of right in the regulation of conduct instead of an appeal to brute force, constitutes an onward step in the evolution of morality. This step individuals have taken, but nations have not, maintaining, on the contrary, a barbarous attitude of hostility analogous to the relations of the animal world, or the primitive savagery of man. Between individuals of the same community open and indiscriminate violence ceases, from whatever cause—let us say as soon as its members perceive the advantage of combination for mutual assistance. But when force has ceased to be the arbiter between man and man, it is still the arbiter between nation and nation. And we are now in a position to formulate the conclusion to which we have been tending, namely, that, on the evolutionary hypothesis that morality is progressive, the morality of nations lingers many centuries behind the morality of individuals.

Before entering more fully into the question, it is

necessary to remove a belief still curiously and anomalously held, that a Christian standard of conduct is set up in politics as well as in private life. It would be difficult indeed to believe that such an opinion is seriously maintained, were it not that notice is frequently attracted to the question by the timidity with which the opposite opinion is sometimes suggested. The tentative nature of such suggestions as that in politics expediency must take the precedence of abstract questions of right and wrong, prove that the opposite opinion, that abstract questions of right and wrong do not give way to expediency, is largely held. So accustomed is the world to think one thing and to do another that the use of force to decide a quarrel is not perceived to be the very negation of justice.

Fortunately, by the survival in nearly all nations of a custom, a relic of ancient barbarism of which mention has already been made, we are able very closely to compare the different estimates taken of the use of force in national and individual relations. Under the sheltering principles of the code of honour, the duel still survives, though condemned both by the law and the general opinion of civilized countries. The duel is exactly analogous to the phenomenon of war, being in both cases either the atonement demanded for an insult or the adjustment of rival claims. But there is an evolutionary significance in the history as well as in the fact of duelling. Going back through the history of any particular nation, we find personal prowess and violence

more and more the measure of right ; we find a lessening sense of justice and of the proper methods of decision, and an increasing respect for the manifestation of force.

Let no one suppose that it is here contended that trial by combat has invariably preceded trial by any rational method. It is quite possible that two contradictory methods may exist side by side at the same time and in the same country, as they do now in Germany, with a distinction between cases so decided which will be found valuable for our after-conclusions. All that is required for the validity of the present argument is the obvious truth that in proportion as we depart from civilization we find violence preponderating over reasonable methods of decision. The idea of justice, however distinct in one or two individual minds, cannot, in an evolutionary survey of morals, be separated from its practical realization. However the idea of justice may first arise, we have historical evidence that in the early history of nations it depends for recognition on an alliance with power. In the mediæval custom of trial by combat we have evidence of a compromise between the growing idea of justice and the lessening supremacy of force. Where formerly force might have carried all before it, it can now only defend its application by postulating that it is exercised in the interests of justice. As civilization advances, it is perceived that this principle is capable of misuse by the strong for the oppression of the weak. But a national habit is not easily changed ; and even when its absurdity is apparent to many, there

are more for whom it preserves its old significance, and who are as yet unenlightened as to its real bearing. Consequently, as thought advances, the weak and pious mind is placed in a dilemma. The arrangement is inconsistent with the barest principles of justice ; but it is habitual, and, on the postulate of the divine superintendence of the universe, such an arrangement cannot have been permitted without some security that the interests of justice should be preserved. Therefore there is but one resource, the invariable *petitio principii* adopted by man when the facts of the universe too flagrantly violate his growing sense of justice. The pious mind, which custom blinds to the initial absurdity of the situation, takes refuge in the conviction that God will defend the right, and that thus the victor will by divine intervention be certified as the representative of the justice of the case.

Now, it is some time since the world has recognized the fact that mortal combat between two individuals, even when invested with the pomp of state ceremony and inaugurated with the sanctity of religion, may fail to settle justly an abstract question of right and wrong. It is probable that the repeated failure of such tests, as well as an advance in conceptions of justice, went to prove that justice may be invoked in vain against villainy supported by a skilful arm and a bold heart. Between individuals might was found to be no measure of right, and no amount of prayers could make it so. And yet the conduct of nations in the decision of precisely similar

questions is still, in spite of moral and intellectual progress, characterized by the same barbarity as that which has stamped the individual relations of peoples in direct proportion to their deficiency in the first requisites of civilization. Nor let us smile at the solemnity of the trial by combat of our ignorant ancestors, or at the touching trust displayed in the issue. In national conflict the absurdity is exactly repeated at this day, with a similar belief that the result of the bloodshed is the peculiar care of Providence.

But the anomalies of the case do not end here. Not only is this contradiction between national and individual morality practically unperceived, but national self-assertion, even when accompanied by a total disregard of justice, is the subject of secret admiration. The praise of war has inspired the noblest poems ever written, and still associates the epic and heroic verse with all that fires the imagination and kindles heroism. Yet it is sad to think on what is the reverse side of even the very purest patriotism. Strip away for a moment that personal element of unshrinking heroism which surrounds and hallows our armies on the march, and consider what a hateful rivalry is disguised in the garb of a misleading sentiment, what devil's work is by a trick of fancy clothed with the heavenly aspect of duty and unselfish devotion. Between the destruction of life within the limits of a society and slaughter in war there is no difference in result except in numbers and the scale on which the bloodshed is conducted, and on this view the

superior horror is left to the account of war. But there is a vast difference in motive, and this is the cause of the curiously different moral estimates which are taken of slaughter under these two different aspects. The one is often prompted by all the purest influences which animate and beautify life, the love of home, of country, and not infrequently of God too ; the other by the basest passions that blacken the soul—avarice, revenge, selfishness, hatred. Man may well doubt the value of his moral intuitions when they have persistently lent their ennobling influence to gild and glorify the horrors of war, and have helped to blind nations to a sense of the terrible iniquity they are mutually perpetrating, by allowing such things to become associated in their minds with some of the most beautiful ideas of human prowess and self-sacrifice.

From such considerations the conclusion follows that the morality practised by nations is less developed than that practised by individuals. Among fellow-members of the same society justice is earnestly sought, and the law-courts decide matters which would else be left to violence. Trial by combat, obsolete between individuals, is still the recognized method of deciding the quarrels of nations. But if it is futile as a test of right and wrong between individuals, it is also futile as a test between nations. The truth is that we are now dealing with an inversion of thought to be afterwards more fully discussed, one case out of many in which the natural or habitual order of thought is different from the actual

order of things. In the contests of nations now, as formerly in the contests of individuals, it is not the question of right, but the question of superiority, which is being fought out. Whenever two nations meet in war, the real animating cause is that mutual jealousy which pervades the relations of organisms. Soon, however, the recognition of some other principle than mere antagonism causes nations as well as men to be ashamed of an open profession of a creed of bloodshed, and consequently, as a salve to the national conscience, some phantom of morality, some fiction of offended honour, is alleged as the cause. Both in national and private conflict, the idea of justice, when first struggling into recognition, would seem to be merely a garment to hide the deformity of the naked principle of mutual self-assertion. Hence the anomaly of two nations trusting in perfect confidence to the same deity for success against each other. They cannot criticize the hidden instinct that urges them on ; and, though the wrong may sometimes be less on one side than on the other, each persuades itself of the justness of its cause, or, at the worst, can exonerate itself by political sophistries. And so the absurdity, which in a mediæval form between individuals raises a contemptuous smile, goes on repeating itself in a national form. As formerly in private combat, so now in war, God is solemnly invoked to defend the right ; and, history would add, with equal futility and irrelevance. If heaven did not see fit in single combats to give victory to a puny arm raised in the defence of truth,

neither need it necessarily see fit to grant victory to that nation which has right on its side. Both nations advance to the conflict firmly trusting in the merits of their cause ; the vanquished are reduced to the necessity of confessing that defeat may be a blessing in disguise, and the victors are confirmed in their belief that the God of justice has been fighting their battles, while the religious world looks on with apparently unshaken confidence in the virtue of gunpowder as a moral test, and reprobates as a wicked blasphemy the caustic remark of Napoleon, that Providence was usually found to be on the side of the stronger battalions.

There is one school of thought only that has attempted to grapple with the difficulty, and the solution which it offers is profoundly valuable, not merely on account of the historical change perceptible in the answer, but more especially for the implication which is contained in that answer. National disputes are the province of international law, and to its exponents we may naturally look for assistance. In their answer we may detect an illustration of Comte's laws of thought, beginning as it does in a theological and ending in a rational interpretation of the difficulty.

By Comte's law, the cultivated intellect, when confronted with an apparently inexplicable phenomenon, refers to an immediate divine agency as the motor power, and only later, as experience and knowledge grow, does the conception of a possible natural cause grow too. Similarly in the infancy of moral speculation,

when the growing belief in a right as in some way superior to a wrong is shocked by the otherwise meaningless evil of war, the result is supposed to be under the actual superintendence of the Deity, and the winning cause, therefore, to be the right cause.

Again, when this conception is outgrown, the infliction of the evil is supposed to be for the purpose of resultant good ; the theological interpretation is, by a change of front, maintained. Finally, for moral speculation advances while moral anomalies remain, the theological interpretation is relinquished, and the best escape that is possible is made from the necessity of confessing a huge moral anomaly. The explanation begins by being theological, and when that gradually becomes unsuited to reflective minds, it becomes, as far as it can, rational.

Blackstone, in his "Commentaries" (book iv. ch. v.), writing in an unscientific age, and, above all, in an age when moral speculation could hardly be said to exist, says that, in the case when offence against a given law is incident to whole states or nations, "recourse can only be had to war ; which is an appeal to the God of hosts to punish such infractions of public faith as are committed by one independent people against another, neither state having any superior jurisdiction to resort to upon earth for justice."

In other words, the moral perception, revolting at the common practice of men, falls back upon the curious idea that an appeal to force is an appeal to God, as if

divine decisions could only be registered after preliminaries of revolting barbarity.

Similarly, Bacon speaks of wars as being "the highest trials of right, when princes and states, that acknowledge no superior upon earth, shall put themselves upon the justice of God for the deciding of their controversies by such success as it shall please Him to give on either side."

But even the conservative spirit of law is unable to maintain such an interpretation beyond its time.

"When a question of right is in controversy between nations," says Twiss ("Law of Nations," ch. ii. p. 50), "there is no supreme chief to whose hands the direction of the united force of all nations has been entrusted, and who would be enabled thereby to enforce the decree of any tribunal to which the question of controverted right might be referred. In the absence of all other means of adjustment, every nation falls back upon the united force of all its members, and endeavours to enforce what it conceives to be right by the exertion of that force against the wrong-doer."

Here the advance of thought has carried us beyond the solution of a childish age, and we have the facts of the case tersely stated: force is no longer an appeal to God, but is supposed to be enlisted as the ally of justice. But, in the first place, it is to be remarked that the decision of every nation's right is thus left in its own hands, a course which, between individuals, is equivalent to the very negation of justice. Consequently, in the

absence of all direct evidence on the subject, we should, from a knowledge of the tendency of such a measure between individuals, be justified in assuming that it would have the same tendency between communities—an inference which history emphatically confirms.

There is, however, a further objection to the legitimacy of the above explanation—an objection already touched upon, and which, indeed, is philosophical rather than legal. It is, in fact, that this theory involves the implication that all contention between communities is upon a question of right and wrong. Now, though it might certainly be possible to reduce all contentions within such a category, yet such a classification is, as it were, imposed from outside, and such an idea need by no means be present to the minds of the contending parties. History is an accumulation of evidence which puts this interpretation out of court. The question of right, where it is not altogether dispensed with, is at best but a diplomatic pretext. The collision of nations is first a sociological and afterwards a moral phenomenon, and though a question of morality must always in one sense be involved, yet the primary instinct of antagonism urges nations, as all other organisms, against one another in the absence of any real ground of dissension. The fact before us with which we have to grapple, but which, it may be allowed, is beyond the scope of international law, is that the mere contiguous existence of societies implies movements antagonistic to each other's welfare, and thus questions of dispute are raised, and not *vice*

versâ. To say that societies war upon each other in consequence of a disputed question of right is a *ὑστερον πρότερον* in the sociological history of the phenomenon.

Moral philosophy, then, has no explanation to offer of war. In the account given by international law, however, there is a unanimity of much value upon one essential point, which has an important bearing upon any theory as to the origin of morality. As there is no supreme international arbiter analogous to the state-power to which individuals entrust the decision of their disputes, and which enforces the judgment of the courts, states have therefore no alternative but an appeal to force. Such is the verdict of the trained legal intellect, and that it contains a truth no honest inquirer can doubt. To those who believe morality to be the mere result of the commands of a superior, and nothing more, the answer would be all-sufficient. But the immense majority of men, who are not trained legal or political thinkers, do not readily connect the ideas of morality and force. Still less do they consider the realization of morality to be entirely dependent on force. Yet to some such conclusion they must here find themselves compelled. For if moral ideas have any constraining influence upon men, no reason has been given why those ideas should have less influence over communities than over individuals. To answer that there is no international power to enforce right action is from this point of view entirely beside the question, moral ideas having

by hypothesis a constraining influence apart from any tribunal.

For the moralist who would pursue the question further, there remains the following problem—that if it is the presence or absence of the constraining force of a governing body which causes the difference between national and individual morality, what in this case is the relation of morality to force?

If, again, there is more behind—if there are differences between the individual and the social organism which, apart from the question of a constraining force, would be calculated to produce a difference in morality, then such differences must as far as possible be elucidated in the hope of throwing some light upon the origin of morality, as well as of offering something more satisfactory upon the present question of national morality than the half-solution of jurists and the no-solution of moralists. If morality is the outcome of a moral sense, or is the pursuit of the happiness of the individual, or the pursuit of the happiness of the greatest number, the *onus probandi* rests with each and all of these philosophers to show why these various motives are not universally interoperative—why they do not embrace the interest and happiness of the whole world, rather than merely the interest and happiness of individuals composing different antagonistic sections.

It might, perhaps, be unnecessary to seek any further proof as to this double standard of morality, did we not occasionally meet with such assertions as that of Mr.

Samuel Morley (Preface to Machiavelli's "The Prince"), that a state which draws a distinction between its private and public morality is sure in consequence to come to ruin: the fact being that the difference between the private and public morality of all states is as gross and glaring as it can well be made; and yet it is not in consequence of that, but rather of the opposite attitude, if states come to ruin. And the fact cannot be glozed over, least of all by a process similar to that which proves the necessary fatality of bathing on a Sunday, by choosing here and there, out of a thousand contradictory, one solitary affirmative case where mishap is subsequent in time to the commission of the offence. Let us turn to history and register the verdict we deduce from thence. What do we find there of the morality that guides the actions of individuals? Absolutely none. The history of Rome is the proudest page in the record of civilization; and what is the history of Rome but a tale of colossal self-assertion and of unjustifiable aggressions, forming a long chain in which the links of cruelty, treachery, and heartless bloodshed are ever and again recurring? And when the agonies of oppression, which for a lengthy period of years they inflicted on the world, should, according to professed ideas of morality, excite our liveliest indignation, they rather form a glorious chronicle which is the envy and admiration of a degenerate posterity; a text-book on which the ambition of the young has for centuries been nurtured, with the avowed purpose of teaching them to rival, as

far as may be, this great people in the art of national robbery and murder.


From the point of view of abstract morality no defence can be urged for such conduct, or for the shifting verdict passed on it by the world, which, while condemning such practices if contemporary, yet applauds them by its historical judgment. But from the point of view of a deeper sociological insight there is justification for this quiet and illogical assumption, that the affairs of nations stand on a different moral basis, and are regulated by cruder laws than the affairs of individuals. Throughout the history of morality might has preceded right, and self-assertion at the expense of others is, as the theory of evolution proves, the inevitable precursor of a higher morality. With individuals the law of self-assertion is in conflict with a higher law which forbids self-assertion at the expense of another, or, to speak in technical terms, egoism is largely tempered by altruism. With nations egoism is still the supreme consideration, and, however much we may deplore the necessity of bloodshed, we may at least take refuge in the optimistic conclusion that, things being constituted as they are, in the past history of the world at least the purpose of moral order has best been subserved by leaving the policy of national self-assertion to pave the way for a higher individual morality. The verdict which all sensible men have passed upon the history of Rome proves beyond a doubt that the end sometimes justifies the means ; that we must shut our eyes to the manner

of the execution of a civilizing mission, and direct our attention to the grandeur of the results. The Romans were the most egoistic of nations, and yet they more than all others have hastened the civilization and morality of the modern world. They certainly did not contemplate with philanthropic satisfaction the probable effect of their conquests on the future of mankind. They merely obeyed an instinct which told them to go forth and possess the world, and in obeying that instinct they conferred a more lasting benefit on mankind than if their policy had been directed by a senate of moral philosophers, actuated by the sublimest principles which can influence the mind of man.

Now, there can be no doubt as to the abstract superiority of guiding nations by high moral principles, and it is no delight in debasing moral ideals and showing the rude nature of their real composition which suggests an opposite course. But in this case it is not the desirability, but the practicability, of the suggestion which limits its application. The programme of national morality must be self-preservation before any higher motive. Even individuals are morally limited by the nature of their surroundings, and with nations the power of doing right is more limited still. Individual morality has reached so high an ideal standard that it has long been held that the necessity for right action does not cease, even when right action would entail the loss of life. But after eliminating instances of self-sacrifice, which fall under quite another head from that of death

for a moral principle, there will be found remaining but a slender record in private life of the deliberate preference of death to a derogation from right. By constantly dwelling on the moral necessity of this ideal rule, an incapacity results for estimating actual facts, and for observing that, if an average be taken through all ranks of life, the percentage of those who would adhere to a moral principle in the face of imminent destruction would not be nearly so high as the man of right impulses would anticipate.

If, then, to incur serious injury through adherence to principle is not by any means universal among individuals, among nations the possibility of altruism being practised with anything but the most disastrous consequences is doubly removed. Right cannot be urged upon a state as a necessity in the face of probable extinction. To many such a statement is probably shocking, and in a less generalized form—that a state, for instance, must look to its own interests even if it involve a certain amount of injustice to other states—would probably raise something like a howl of indignation from the many who find a virtue in shutting out fact from their sight by a veil of moral profession. Translated into concrete terms, a fact which has happened in history, the theory wears a very different aspect. The Greek philosopher Carneades, while residing at Rome in the power of his captors, prisoner from a country subjugated by the Romans without the shadow of a moral pretext, startled his masters by a proposition which appeared to them fraught



with the proverbial immorality of the sophists from whom he was sprung. He affirmed that there was a principle of utility, entirely different from questions of right and wrong, which guided action ; and he clinched his proposition by derisively asking the Romans what would be their position were they to relinquish all conquests that they had unjustly made. The Romans indignantly and triumphantly refuted his principles, but they could not refute the facts of their history ; and it is instructive to observe that they were headed in their denunciation by men who, in their national capacity as members of the senate, were the leading spirits of one of the most cruelly aggressive nations that has ever existed. How well this outburst against the iniquitous theory of the Greek philosopher must have sounded from the lips of Cato, who is renowned in history for his cold-blooded ejaculation of "Delenda est Carthago"! Again, suppose that Carneades had persuaded the Romans to forego their unjust conquests ; suppose that they had gone still further, and refrained their colonizing or aggressive propensities, substituting instead some advanced theory of political morality ;—the result would have been that the great work of organizing the scattered nations would have been left undone, and the world thrown back some centuries in its advance, if no other had stepped in to take up the condemned policy. Any advance in morality is from egoism to altruism, and, if it is to succeed, must be a more or less simultaneous movement of the units concerned. Could a

premature international code be forced upon any single nation, the morality of the world would be retarded ; for premature altruism on the part of either nation or individual involves destruction by a coarser foe. What, then, it is derisively asked, is death in an honourable cause to be discountenanced among individuals as an absurdity ? Is right action only to be maintained when it can be so maintained with impunity ? Even the man who is farthest from making any such assertion would admit that there is a point at which such conduct becomes what we call Quixotism. Morality requires a prepared surface on which to act. A man may die rather than do a dishonourable action, and leave behind him a memory and example that may help to ennoble the lives of thousands ; but his act exercises this effect purely by virtue of the fact that those who profit by the example of self-sacrifice are capable of recognizing its inherent beauty. Unless such an action strikes a sympathetic chord its influence is lost, and, under the circumstances supposed of unreceptive surroundings, such sacrifice, if consistently carried out, would be fruitless in the cause of morality, because despised at the moment, and unchronicled for the admiration of posterity. And it will hardly be contended that the welfare of an unborn posterity, who may never learn the deed, is in itself a sufficient reason for right action under the conditions described. Such being the case with regard to individuals, it will easily be seen that under the present relation of societies it would be of no avail

to inaugurate a course of national self-denial, because such altruism would merely cause an increase of egoism in other nations, instead of urging them to similar sacrifices. Were such a doctrine consistently preached, the natural and uncritical instinct of mankind would set it aside as it has already rightly done, even at the expense of a discrepancy between theory and practice. A good man among a world of villains is doomed to unavailing extinction. A nation at the present day actually, and not merely in theory, seeking to live up to an altruistic standard, would first be a mark for its foes, and then, when laid in the dust, instead of leaving a noble memory to elevate mankind, it would become a fitting theme for the derision of all practical politicians.

We applaud the conquering career of great nations, in spite of the fact that such applause is a contradiction of abstract moral principle, from a half-unconscious recognition of the truth that the progress of the world which we call civilization is only rendered possible when some great nation, in its rough and cruel way, destroys the separate individuality of lesser nationalities, prepares their material in the furnace of war, and welds them on the anvil of its supreme power. The communities that would otherwise have frittered their forces in useless struggles have a unity forced upon them, and their energies are free to turn in other directions. The spirit of tyranny meeting the spirit of political independence has been a mingled curse and blessing to the world. Least of all does it become Englishmen to criticize nature's

method in this matter too closely. England, which many of its countrymen believe to be the most moral country in history, and whom they would scorn to believe actuated in its policy by other than the highest motives, shows in its annals crimes enough and to spare when judged by the standard of individual morality; but when judged by the only fair international code which can be framed on the facts of history, it has one of the proudest claims to the recognition of posterity. The greatest modern historian of Rome (Mommsen, vol. iv. pt. i. p. 209), when speaking of the "law by virtue of which a people that has grown into a state absorbs its neighbours who are in political nonage, and a civilized people absorbs its neighbours who are in intellectual nonage," honours England in its conquering and civilizing career by a comparison with the Imperial city. Just as Italy conquered and absorbed surrounding nations, so "England, with equal right, has in Asia reduced to subjection a civilization of rival standing, but politically impotent, and in America and Australia has marked and ennobled, and still continues to mark and ennoble, barbarian countries with the impress of its nationality."

Again, with reference to England's Indian possessions. Mr. Bright is judging from the narrow individual standpoint when he can find nothing better to say of our Indian Empire than that it is consoling to our consciences to forget how we acquired it. But the writer in the *Times* (March 27, 1883) is judging from the proper standpoint of sociological morality when he says

that the conscience which prompts Mr. Bright's utterance "is a conscience which would have stricken with palsy every man or nation whose deeds the world cares to remember. If," he continues, "our Indian Empire is founded, as Mr. Bright asserts, upon breaches of the Ten Commandments, what step is there in human emergence from barbarism of which the same might not be said with equal truth?"

Finally, Mr. Seeley, in his lectures on the expansion of England, utters a similar if less certain note. Conscientious, apparently, of the irreconcilable difference between public and private morality, he points out to the students of Cambridge, as a satisfactory feature in the case, that retribution does not necessarily follow on national wrong-doing, and that we at least are no worse than our neighbours. Knowing, too, that the plain moral teaching of history is not exactly of the sort that can with impunity be preached to young and ardent hearers, he is driven to assert that the end justifies the means, at least in national moral history. "Perhaps," he says, "you may ask whether we can expect or wish to prosper if crime has gone to the making of it (our colonial empire). But the God who is revealed in history does not usually judge in this way. History does not show that conquests lawlessly made in one generation are certain or even likely to be lost in another. . . . The title of a nation to its territory is generally to be sought in primitive times, and would be found, if we could recover it, to rest upon violence and massacre." But though he

is at variance with the received moral code, every one feels Mr. Seeley's conclusions to be in the main right.

Judged by considerations of individual morality, England has no shadow of a right to war against weaker and unoffending nations, and only does so by virtue of some sociological law which has ever directed a stronger people to use its strength, and which secures at least this result—that the torch of war shall not infrequently light the beacon of civilization.

CHAPTER IV.

EVOLUTIONAL EXPLANATION OF THE DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN NATIONAL AND INDIVIDUAL MORALITY.

WE must now ascertain the conclusions to which the considerations in the previous chapter lead. We have ascertained that the ordinary unscientific attitude of the average man is at one and the same time almost to applaud and condemn the morality of a state in relation to other states : he applauds it by encouraging the extension of the dominion of his own state, frequently in flagrant violation of the most palpable justice ; he condemns it by professing to hold moral principles with which he refuses to see that his national attitude is out of keeping—he condemns it by his unwillingness to formulate the real principles which regulate the interaction of societies.

But a clear consideration of fact, untrammelled by any illegitimate desire to make things out better than they are, can only lead to one conclusion—that not only do the acts of nations continue to evince a crude self-interest which individuals would be ashamed to profess, not only does the doctrine “might is right” continue to

regulate almost entirely the relations between strong and weak nations, not only do nations rarely act from any other motive than self-interest, but they frequently fall short of even a self-interested morality in obeying the primitive instincts of retaliation and bloodshed. Nations to-day are respected in proportion to their military prowess and their power of making good on the field of battle their view of a disputed question.

Notwithstanding the flagrant nature of this moral discrepancy, historians have always shrunk from acknowledging the fact, and politicians, except in rare cases, from openly avowing the principle. The question has been raised, but never settled, because never boldly faced. The facts have been set forth as cogently as possible ; the theoretical and *a priori* objections to the belief in a lower code are now to be examined.

The first objection will undoubtedly be that, as a state is made up of individuals, it must be actuated by the sum total of the motives of these individuals ; and that, consequently, the morality of the whole must be the combined morality of the parts. Leaving out of sight the fact that the whole of the previous chapter gives the lie to this anticipation of similarity between individual and national morality, we must now consider the theoretical side of the question. In advancing the seemingly paradoxical theory that the morality of the whole is not the combined morality of the parts, it will be necessary to do more than point to the testimony of mere facts, for those facts are not so new as to warrant

the supposition that, when examined, they will yield by themselves any more important revelation than they have done hitherto to the world ; for, on the contrary, the world by mere habituation has become blunted to their real significance. But when, in addition to the discovery of a discrepancy between two classes of facts hitherto supposed to be similar, there are found reasons rendering this discrepancy probable *à priori*, then we may hope to raise the truth from the region of merely empirical observation, and, by connecting it causally with what goes before and what comes after, assign its place as an important fact in the evolution of morality.

Now, it is perfectly true, mathematically speaking, that a nation is the sum of its individual members. Consequently, the theory that the morality of nations is not nearly so developed as the morality of individuals implies this assertion—that, morally speaking, a nation is not made up of the sum of its individual parts, and that the morality of a nation is not constituted by the morality of its parts. We have now to reckon with a formidable antagonist who represents the opposite conclusion. John Stuart Mill ("Logic," 10th edit. book iii. ch. vi. ; and again book vi. ch. vii. and ix.) enunciates the principle that "In social phenomena the composition of causes is the universal law ;" the case of the composition of causes being, in his own words, "the case in which the joint effect of causes is the sum of their separate effects" (book iii. ch. vi.).

In stating his view of the method to be pursued in

social science, he gives it as his opinion that "Human beings in societies have no properties but those which are derived from and may be resolved into the laws of the nature of individual man. In social phenomena the composition of causes is the universal law" (book vi. ch. vii.). And again (ch. ix.), "However complex the phenomena, all their sequences and co-existences result from the laws of their separate elements. The effect produced in social phenomena by any complex set of circumstances amounts precisely to the sum of the effects of the circumstances taken separately."

It is only in the immaturity of social science that such a conclusion could have been formed by such a man. It is first to be remarked that, by applying the principle of the composition of causes to social phenomena, Mill is logically bound to maintain positions of which it would be hardly a parody to state that they are similar to the belief that a regiment of soldiers would together reduce a fort in the same time that it could be reduced by each soldier advancing singly.

In the next place, the opinions of Mill can be balanced by quotations from a thinker of acknowledged merit, who has, besides, the advantage of an acquaintance with social science such as the contemporary state of knowledge rendered impossible in Mill's time. Mr. Leslie Stephen, in his "Science of Ethics" (ch. iii. pt. ii. sect. 17), says, "It is true that the properties of a society cannot be deduced from the independent properties of its members in the same sense as it is true that the properties of any

living body cannot be deduced from the mechanical and chemical properties of the elements of which it is composed. . . . But, further, any given society has properties of its own which cannot be deduced from those properties of the individual which are common to men in all social states, for those properties may, as we have seen, remain constant when the social organization varies."

A study of the reasoning from amidst which this passage is selected will prove beyond a doubt to all those who have the least previous acquaintance with sociology, that Mill, with all his knowledge of the causal combinations of phenomena, made the most curious mistake with regard to social conditions, and that, when he says (book vi. ch. vii.) that "Men are not, when brought together, converted into another kind of substance, with different properties ; as hydrogen and oxygen are different from water, or as hydrogen, oxygen, carbon, and azote are different from nerves, muscles, and tendons," he may be met, as Mr. Stephen meets him, to all appearance unconsciously, with a direct denial.

Social phenomena belong to that class from which Mill expressly excludes them ; and though the difference resulting from the combination of the individual elements and the result they give may not be so great as the difference between certain chemical combinations and the result they give, yet that difference is in the highest degree striking, and leaves not the slightest doubt as to the classification of social phenomena. But Mill is misled by his antipathy to what he calls the chemical or

experimental method in politics into the conviction that the errors of that method arise from the application of a theory, borrowed from chemistry, to what he believes to be a totally different set of conditions.

Having so far found, then, that both in fact and in theory there is nothing that can be urged against the position here taken up ; that, on the contrary, what we are directly led to infer from an examination of fact—namely, a difference between national and individual morality—we are also led to infer from an independent study of the laws of the combination of phenomena ;—the further consequences of this position may now be examined.


There is an implication involved in the belief that there is a wide difference between individual and national morality, which, in the mouth of an opponent, would doubtless take the form of a serious objection, but which really constitutes the first trace of a truth to which reference has already been made, and the recognition of which is necessary to a proper apprehension of moral science. Since it is impossible that a nation can act as a nation except through the instrumentality of the individuals composing it, if it be insisted that the morality of nations differs from the morality of individuals, then we are forced to the conclusion that the individuals of any nation must act in a double moral capacity, one capacity being national and the other private. In order to substantiate the conclusions at which we have already arrived, men must be found exhibiting two distinct kinds

of moral action in their own persons, one as private individuals, and the other as representatives of a nation. Nor is this so paradoxical as it at first appears, and some suspicion of the truth has always been abroad. Mr. Lecky, in the introduction to his "History of European Morals" (3rd edit. p. 151) says—

"It is probable that the moral standard of most men is much lower in political judgments than in private matters where their own interests are concerned. There is nothing more common than for men who in private life are models of the most scrupulous integrity, to justify or excuse the most flagrant acts of political dishonesty and violence, and we should be greatly mistaken if we argued rigidly from such approvals to the general moral sentiments of those who utter them."

The facts which prove this assertion are daily before our eyes. As to such facts there can be no question ; the only question is as to the significance that resides in them. A survey of the main features of the private and public morality of any of the great military conquerors or statesmen of the world must render the discrepancy apparent. The cautious hesitation with which any such view has been advanced, the belief that such a view belongs to the region of moral casuistry, and is one with which the rigid practical moralist ought not to deal,—these facts go to show how the elements of a problem may lie plainly before the eyes of men unheeded until such time as advancing science shall have reached the height from which alone the proper survey may be

obtained. We have only to rid ourselves of habitual indifference to the paradox that the man who lives in peace and amity with his fellow-citizens is the man who advocates and carries out a cruel foreign policy, and the truth is apparent. Man in two different relations to the external world exhibits two different kinds of moral phenomena, one as a private individual, the other as the unit of a nation. As an individual he presents the complex phenomena of advanced moral conditions ; as one among the units composing a nation he exhibits a crude and barbarous code of ethics, which, if morality were a matter of obedience to abstract principle, his other nature would be bound to repudiate. But such is the irony of existence that in the most glaring case the anomaly is least apparent. There is, as might be anticipated, a point of junction where this double morality is exhibited in action as completely as could be desired, but where the contradiction is as little perceived by the generality of men as in a case of the most subtle casuistry. The field of battle shows us men as heroes in relation to their country, offering the last proof of a refined altruism, while in relation to the opposing section of humanity they are engaged in a work which places them at the opposite end of the moral scale. At the very moment when they are giving their lives for others, the supreme act of a beautiful devotion, they are also destroying the lives of others, an act indistinguishable from the lowest forms of brutality. Against such a phenomenon a thousand moral theories are in a moment



shattered. In all the world of paradox what contrast more startling than this?

Yet for this state of things, so utterly at variance with the conclusions to which ordinary assumptions as to the unity of individual moral principle lead, there must be some striking evolutionary reason. And this evolutionary reason can be no other than the change given to the incidence of the law of antagonism by the passage from the isolated conditions of semi-animal life to the combination of social or family existence.

Evolution is the theory which renders the development of organic life intelligible, and evolution from the moral point of view is antagonism. The struggle for existence, the survival of the fittest, mean antagonism. The first relation in which we find organisms is that of antagonism. The law of natural selection is in its earliest manifestation simply a formula for expressing the incompatibility, under certain circumstances, of the existence of one organism with the existence of another. In such a state of things there is nothing to correspond to what is ordinarily understood by the word morality; the first traces of what we now understand by morality are found when the primary manifestation of the law of natural selection, mutual antagonism, begins to give way before the higher law which forbids self-assertion at the expense of others. This second and higher law is in operation among individuals long before any glimpse of it is found to mitigate the bitterness of national rivalry. We see among the lower animals a competition, either

of the same species with one another for a means of subsistence insufficient for all, or of different species who subsist upon each others' bodies ; or, again, of all indiscriminately for sexual reasons, or in obedience to the mere instinct of antagonism. No trace is found of the first rudiments of morality, except in the rearing of the young. Ascending in the evolutionary scale, we have an advance on these earlier conditions in the position of man. But nature does nothing by bounds ; the process is gradual, and a growing morality cannot shake itself free from the conditions out of which it is sprung. The germ of morality which exists in family relations can only be developed on condition that the law of individual antagonism is converted into the law of national antagonism, thus leaving the individual free to develop proper moral and altruistic qualities. Instincts of cruelty which have accompanied man through the whole course of his previous evolution cannot be eradicated at a stroke, and, if diverted from their original direction of indiscriminate individual animosity, must have their outlet somewhere. That part of the existing fund of antagonism, so to speak, which is set free by the change from an animal state of indiscriminating hatred to a civilized state of mutual assistance, comes into play again as a feeling between families, tribes, nations, groups, which by the very fact of their proximity become rivals, and through the operation of the instinct of antagonism proceed to hostilities. But a man cannot actively concentrate his energies upon more than one

object of hatred at a time, and he that assists him in prosecuting that object becomes his friend.

In the hostility of opposing groups, the rivalry that thus springs into existence acts as a conductor to carry away that animosity which between individuals is the original barrier to the inauguration of a higher morality. Thus it is that individuals are from the first trained in moral relations to one another, while societies are not. On the contrary, the hostility of societies, having sprung into existence at a recent period, is likely from that period to have a long continuance. Or stating the problem in a different way, on the assumption that the law of antagonism is a proper statement of the first relations of organisms to one another, we may say that the social organism, being a new birth, is subject to the first law that regulates the relation of organisms—the law of mutual destruction.

It is as if the hatred and violence which is the natural inheritance of every individual organism, is presented with a new field for its activity by the same process which robs it of the old. Postulating the law of antagonism, at that point of evolution where individuals begin to form into social organisms the antagonism of social organisms takes the place of the antagonism of individual organisms. Along with the change which produces the social organism there is a change in the locality of the disease from which men suffer; a metastasis of violence, to use a medical term, takes place. A faculty the germ of which already existed

in parental love, the altruistic faculty, is called into more universal play. The egoistic faculty, repressed in its more violent manifestations, remains part of it in a modified form, still performing the work of natural selection among individuals ; but the greater portion of its force becomes absorbed in forming national egoism.


Hence the complete separation between the morality of nations and of individuals, between the relation of the members comprising a social organism to one another and their relation to any other social organism, between human beings as individuals and human beings as the units of two different social bodies. The hostility with which they regard one section of the world is the condition of the friendliness with which they regard each other, or, at least, it is the condition of any close and effective co-operation. The raising of harmonious relations out of a world which until now has been all antagonism must be, not by the intelligence and utilitarian considerations of a later date, but by a rude, unconscious process such as befits the time and the men. External pressure and the internal need of resisting it, consolidating the family groups, produce certain individual relations, and not until those individual relations spring up can morality, as we now comprehend it, be said to exist.

The conclusion, then, to which the study of both of fact and of theory leads is that morality is in its origin combination, and the first law of what may be called moral composition shows us that, given a tendency to individual antagonism, the antagonism of opposing combinations ensures the mutual harmony of the parts.

CHAPTER V.

PHYSICAL, INTELLECTUAL, AND MORAL SURVIVAL.

IT has been argued in the previous chapters that, because it is the habit of nations to decide their quarrels by an appeal to force, their morality is therefore immeasurably lower than that of individuals. But it has probably occurred to some, as a saving feature, that the contest of nation against nation performs much the same part in evolution as the contest of individual against individual, ensuring, in fact, the survival of the fittest. This, which, generally speaking, is the prevailing view, which seems to recommend itself as a recompense which Nature owes us for the fact of war, and which is supported by the opinion of more than one well-known writer, possesses at first sight much attraction as the natural and legitimate outcome of the doctrine of evolution. But after a dispassionate survey of the great events of history, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that it is wholly accidental if that nation which survives and displaces the others is the one best fitted to carry on the work of human advancement. With every desire to do so, it is impossible, with the facts of history before us, to acquiesce



in Bagehot's optimistic conclusion that "the characters which do win in war are the characters which we should wish to win in war."

Shall we, then, say that the law of the survival of the fittest is untrue; that, however it may apply to the lower animals, it is untrue of the higher stages of existence? Shall we say that the fact that high intellectual attainments in nations often go down before rude military skill, and that moral beauty of character among individuals is too often crushed out in the fierce turmoil of existence, proves that new conditions have been superinduced, and that the struggle of life hardens men where it should soften them, and gives the ruder, coarser, and more brutal nature an advantage over that gentleness and self-denial which is rightly regarded as the highest type of civilization?

Though every thinking mind detects and laments these apparent aberrations from an ideal law of survival, yet it is not the law, but merely its application, which is at fault. The wonder would rather be if a law, formulated from conditions of animal existence, should, without any alteration in its statement, be found correctly to apply to a world of infinitely more complex phenomena.

In its popular application the formula, "survival of the fittest," is either a *petitio principii* or a mere tautology; for it either assumes those who survive to be those whom, from the point of view of ideal fitness, we should wish to survive, in which case it is a *petitio*

principii, or it is equivalent to "the survival of those who do survive," in which case it is a mere tautology. It is generally unnoticed that the difficulty lies in the use of the word "fittest," which is of the extremest ambiguity, capable of three distinct applications, or, indeed, of as many applications as there have been or can be forms of excellence admired by society. In a savage state, it means the survival of the most savage, of the most dexterous in the unscrupulous use of physical strength—in a word, of the man who best fulfils the conditions of savage existence; in a more advanced civilization, it means a certain combination of qualities, physical, intellectual, and moral, of which we would rightly call the intellectual the most important. Finally, it means a certain proportion of qualities of which the moral part is the newer and more beautiful feature. Applied to animal life or to any state of society where Carlyle's ultimatum, "Can I kill thee, or canst thou kill me?" is likely to be propounded, "fittest" is comparatively restricted in meaning; but with any advance in civilization from that point it becomes dangerously ambiguous, according as the type of excellence of which "fitness" is predicated is a conformity or adaptation to existing social requirements, or to the highest moral ideal conceivable by the human mind. If the type of fitness which is spoken of be merely the ideal of an untutored mind which cannot rise beyond gross conceptions of superiority and success, in such a case as this, and perhaps in many of the most important cases, the non-

survival of the fittest, as a great thinker has suggested, would be a better formulation of the law.

It is clear, then, that with complex social conditions the law of the survival of the fittest requires restatement. Were we to frame an ideal law for the regulation of the world, it would surely be one that would secure the survival of those who most adequately fulfil the highest moral requirements—of those best calculated to produce, both in the present and in the future, the greatest happiness and harmony of mankind. But in the world of fact this is very far from being the case. There is, both in civilized and uncivilized times, a tendency to give the victory in the struggle for existence to the most unscrupulous, while those natures capable of the highest refinement and the most generous action are, by the very fact of their constitution, called upon to surrender their lives, and their voluntary sacrifice is accepted and applauded by society. We arrive, in fact, at a point where survival and moral progress are at odds. The question is how to reconcile these conflicting facts ; how to retain a belief in moral progress and at the same time to account for the universally acknowledged belief in some sort of survival of the fittest.

From what has already been said, it will be seen that the evolution of mankind may be divided into three main periods, not possessing a beginning and an end that may be definitely marked off, yet clearly showing that different characteristics are in relatively different estimation in different ages. These three periods may be called periods

of physical, intellectual, and moral survival. The universal antagonism of organisms takes three forms of rivalry in physical, intellectual, and moral excellence. Primarily this antagonism takes the form of competition in the merely physical qualities of strength and agility, and the individual possessing these excellences in the most eminent degree tends to occupy the chief place and win superior power. Co-operating with these different advantages is a psychological cause—the admiration, namely, of the lesser spirits. The society of the time demands the production of a certain type of excellence, and pays homage to the individual in whom it is most fully realized. But with changing conditions the intellect of man is found to possess a power before which the greatest feats of strength are poor and insignificant. To the slowness of the actual discovery must be added the slowness with which a preconceived type of excellence is dislodged from its supremacy over the popular mind. It is not true that, when the intellectual type of excellence comes to be held in honour, it entirely excludes the physical, or that eventually moral beauty excludes admiration for any other kind of excellence. But undoubtedly there creeps over the face of society, if progressive, a change in which physical qualities become subordinate to intellectual and intellectual to moral.

In the first stage, bodily qualities are not only actually sufficient for winning pre-eminence, and achieve the utmost that can be achieved with a minimum of intellect, but intellectual qualities are not even allowed

to bring in their minimum of reward through the contempt bestowed upon them. In the second stage, it is the physical qualities which are subsidiary, the moral having hardly yet risen into appreciation ; while, in the third stage, neither physical nor intellectual perfection is applauded unless there be superadded a moral beauty, or unless their use is in conformity with moral requirements. It needs but a glance at the varying features of history to verify the truth of these reflections. The marked characteristic of the earlier ages of the history of any people is a tendency to rate the individual according to his prowess in arms, horsemanship, and feats of skill and strength. Learning is relegated to what is considered an inferior order of beings ; while even self-advancement by means of intellectual power is in a measure discredited. For intellect in early times has no recognized standing of its own, except what it may be able to secure by devices which savour of mere cunning, and which are merely subsidiary to force. Accordingly, it is held more honourable to win position and power through the ascendancy over the people which physical superiority gives. There are probably few ardent young readers who do not prefer the hero of the "Iliad" to the hero of the "Odyssey," in spite of the fact that there seems to be a conscious purpose of glorifying Ulysses by the comparison, and of illustrating the actual advantage over mere bravery which an addition of intellect gives. But the young, who in many striking particulars seem to recall the

features of earlier ages, and whose imagination is ever fired by physical rather than by intellectual feats, take Achilles as by far the nobler model of the two. Like the young, too, in this respect, are all uncultivated portions of mankind with whom admiration for physical powers is the first natural instinct, and who habitually make athletic feats their ambition and their measure of worth.

The transition is most easily recognized at all periods in the leaders of the people, who not unnaturally owe their position to their conformity with the requirements of the time. But of minute comparison of detail there is no actual need, as the change in the method by which individuals make their superiority felt is sufficiently marked by the disuse of the originally universal habit of wearing arms, and by the admission of a general advance from a military to a non-military type which is the most obvious characteristic of a progressive age.

Of the admiration of intellect, and of the hold which intellectual power possesses on the world, it is not difficult for any one to recall instances, for it is by intellectual means that the struggle for existence in civilized times is carried on. Political intrigues, the struggle for wealth, the rivalry for social supremacy, are all conducted with intellectual weapons. Of the present age the struggle for wealth is most characteristic, and presents the most varied field for the unscrupulous use of talent. The nobility, more than any other class, exemplify either the past or present existence of physical survival ; for though

they have at all times taken a part in such intellectual movements as are connected with statecraft, yet they owe their position to hereditary descent from a reign of force, and even in a non-military age look upon the profession of arms with exceptional favour. The answer of Hugh Bigod as to what constituted his title to his estates may be taken as typical in one form or another of the title of all nobility, for, if traced far enough back, estates are proved to be the reward either of private warfare or of assistance rendered to the crown.

The great mark of the transference of the struggle for existence into the region of intellect is the development of trade and the increased respectability of the various non-military professions, and, in obedience to this change of feeling, the nobility, who are originally inclined to regard buying and selling with unmixed contempt, are eventually in many cases constrained to choose between the equally distasteful alternative of falling in the popular estimation as their relative importance diminishes, or of being compelled to forego an hereditary prejudice and to fight the world with its new weapons. For it is necessarily amongst the most conservative classes that adherence to a state of things created by military supremacy is the strongest, and when such classes begin to participate in the change, the advance may be regarded as practically won.

The power of making an immediate and speedy impression contributes largely at all times to the prevalence of any form of excellence, and wealth possesses

in this particular an advantage over all other results of mental power. For it is well calculated to strike both the reflective and unreflective, the unreflective by vulgar display, the reflective by consideration of the comparative powerlessness of genius without money as a co-operating factor. In the pursuit of wealth, too, the reckless use of intellect for the attainment of power, unhampered by moral considerations, is well illustrated. No real consideration, among the great body of men, being paid to anything but wealth, the struggle for its possession is proportionately fierce, and assent is mutually asked and given for the tacit omission of moral restraints.

On so obvious a change as this from physical to intellectual tests of excellence it is unnecessary to dwell at greater length.

Turning to the third sphere into which individual struggle is carried, moral survival may be defined as the benefit derived from any species of conduct which implies the advantage of others. If the change from the worship of bodily to that of mental superiority is, as history shows it to be, slow, much more difficult is the effectual recognition of a high morality as an ideal end worth striving for ; for high moral worth, even when allowed as an excellence, is rather praised as an excellence in others than sought as an end for the individual. But, nevertheless, there is a moral excellence which, in all ages that have partaken in any degree of civilization, has been in request, and of which the value is more and more clearly seen in proportion as the rational end of

existence is more clearly appreciated. The tendency of moral progress is undoubtedly to subordinate to this one the other forms of excellence. But the law of human development appears to be such that the habits of the individual nature, as well as the forms of social development, are long and perversely deaf to the dictates of the rational principle in morals, and continually perpetuate a type of conduct which that rational principle has condemned. Moral excellence is sometimes in advance of its times and sometimes falls a victim to the harder egoistic nature. But it is none the less certain that this sacrifice of the higher to the lower, of the more advanced to the less advanced type, which is the necessary consequence, at least, of moral adaptation, is universally deplored, and it is universally admitted that under more perfect social arrangements such loss would be impossible. It is thus that the superiority of moral excellence is attested, and until moral progress reaches the point at which self-abnegation, so far from being suicidal, will be beneficial even to those that practise it, it will have fallen short of the requirements of humanity. It is because this higher law rejects the physical test of a barbarous age that our hospitals have sprung into existence, that the physically helpless are no longer left to the fate that must inevitably have been theirs in earlier times, but are rather shielded, because to assist the weak is dimly seen to have a tenfold deeper and more far-reaching beauty than to assist the strong. To those who complain of the consequent perpetuation of weaker

types, the answer is that nothing must be done which will unnecessarily wound the sympathies, and that the sentiment of pity must be cultivated even at the expense of the physical deterioration of the race.

The difficulty that militates against the progress of the world lies in passing from the consideration of merely personal aims to those that comprehend the welfare of others as an object in itself worth compassing. Yet such an adaptation, though most systems may have found it logically indefensible, nevertheless does take place as a matter of fact. Physical and intellectual excellence can demonstrate their use by pointing to the world at their feet. Moral excellence depends rather upon the prophetic promptings of the human mind, which points to it as the highest form of future excellence, than on any actual achievement for showing its intrinsic superiority. A type of excellence which may dictate the completest abnegation of self cannot always be sustained by material results. But by antedating in mental survey the course of evolution, we can at least point out the wealth of power which in a well-ordered community would be the necessary reward, not of such particular acts, but of the disposition that would lead to them. Though it may be admitted that no people has ever reached a sufficiently high standpoint to give its full value to moral survival, yet all civilized communities have recognized the beauty of a high moral type, and in private life at least have given effect to that recognition. In spite of all counteracting tendencies, in spite of the

fact that practice does not keep pace with profession, to do good is unhesitatingly pronounced to be the highest end to which the efforts of human genius can be turned. Accordingly, as we are here concerned rather with facts than explanations, rather with the fact that morality is considered worth striving for than with the explanation of how it comes to be so considered, this general testimony of the human intellect to the desirability, either present or future, either actual or ideal, of moral excellence may be taken as evidence of an actual or ideal moral survival.

We have, then, ample reason for believing that, though moral survival does not as yet secure the highest rewards, yet the disadvantage under which it lies it shares in common with the intellectual type of excellence when struggling into recognition, and is, besides, more certainly attested by the emphatic approval and aspiration of the human mind as the final form of excellence. The first proof of the existence of moral survival is found in this emphatic approval of the human mind, which sets aside considerations of both physical and intellectual excellence in its favour. The second proof is that moral survival does in fact enjoy its own reward, either internal or external, in ways which are suited to varying individual disposition. For there are three elements in moral survival—an altruistic element, a perfectionist, and a utilitarian. Side by side they perform their work; for the altruistic element, which has accompanied the course of evolution all

along, to find a new and varied sphere in the social organism, gives a new and beautiful direction to the spirit of individual antagonism, by bidding the individual show his superiority to others in the many ways which the interests of society still allow. It is the altruistic element which prevents moral survival from becoming a contradiction in terms, and which converts the spirit of antagonism into that noble paradox whereby the rarer natures compete for the privilege of doing good, whereby superiority is sought and found in the moral victory of disdaining a selfish action and of relinquishing an anti-social claim. It is, in fact, by virtue of the altruistic element, by virtue of the growing sense of union between the individual and the social organism, that the perfectionist element becomes operative. Though probably no individual was ever yet able to prevent himself from feeling a secret pleasure at the power which the perfection of his qualities and the disposition to use them well gave him over those around, yet it is not in power as such that the reward of moral survival lies, but in the conscious superiority which self-culture imparts, and in the pleasure which is derived from contributing however small a portion to the similar perfection and happiness of the world. By a well-known mental law, the perfection of a capacity brings pleasure to its owner. But evolution also shows that, as a matter of fact, throughout the animal world, though in varying degrees, care for others is capable of bringing in a return of positive pleasure. If, then, to the pleasure which attaches to the

perfection of our capacities on their own account we add the pleasure which is the reward of doing good, these combined motives are seen to afford, not only an inducement towards the attainment of moral excellence, but also a physical reason for personal well-being. Finally, if these considerations are not together held sufficient to make moral excellence desirable on its own account, we may take refuge in the positive inducement held out by the social sanction in the form of utilitarian rewards. For the less-developed nature the utilitarian element adds a most valuable incentive to morality.* Moral excellence is not without its material reward and its individual triumph, which, in a final analysis, in some minds is alone sufficient to justify its operation. We may win power, the tribute paid to forms of successful antagonism, in other ways than by mere self-assertion. Indeed, as the necessary dependence of individuals upon one another becomes clearer, self-assertion pure and simple becomes rather a loss than a gain. Even in our own imperfect state of society, moral beauty, in private life at least, enjoys the very sunshine of existence, the ready love and welcome of all with whom it comes in contact. Many people, Mr. Herbert Spencer has said, practically live in a better world than their more selfish neighbours, the self-denying and sympathetic nature having the rare quality of eliciting whatever of its like may exist in another. And though

* By the utilitarian element is here meant those considerations of future advantage or present pleasure which lead a man to benefit others.

it is true that the self-denying disposition may exist independently of approval from outside, though it is true that men approve certain acts in others because they coincide with the promptings of the unselfish part of their own nature, and not merely because they tend to their own welfare, yet in discussing the utilitarian rewards of moral survival it is necessary to point out that the instinct of self-denial derives much of its value from the stress laid upon it by society. Race antagonism presents man from the very earliest period of history with a phenomenon of quasi-involuntary self-sacrifice. This phenomenon, perceived to be of social use, is encouraged for social purposes, and the instinct is trained from the earliest childhood. It is the force of the social sanction which reverses the self-destructive influence of altruism, and in a way identifies the opposite results of egoism and self-denial. In proportion as a society perceives that the happiness of all must grow side by side with the mutual relinquishment of egoistic claims, in like proportion is the individual disposition which tends to secure these results held in honour. If gentleness, self-denial, and high moral qualities do not invariably and usually draw to themselves that amount of worldly consideration which the opposite qualities too frequently ensure, it is not because the phenomenon here termed moral survival is a fiction, but because the competing laws of egoistic survival have under present and past social conditions, by virtue of their prior genesis in the world of evolutionary law, so far

taken the precedence of that species of survival which is destined to be the prevailing type. If the reward of moral excellence has been less than that of other forms, it is not because the deliberate preference of the world wills it so, but that individuals are born under conditions from which they vainly try in their moral aspirations to shake themselves free. But iron-bound by other laws of their being, the majority of mankind have pursued their reckless course, content to recognize without imitating the heroism of those who, here and there throughout all ages, have attempted to stem the tide of reckless self-seeking. The moral fate of mankind in each successive epoch hangs in the balance. The moral progress of the present day may be considerable, but it has never been continuous through the world's history. The forces of society wane, and by a fatal inconsistency it would seem that, as in a nation's history the intellectual perception of the requisite moral ends is increased, the energy of individual character requisite for the realization of such ends is decreased. Until the social sanction is strong enough to accord to moral worth higher honours than to any other species of excellence, the world will continue to pursue its miserable course, involving the vast majority of human beings in a weary hopeless struggle.

We have seen, then, firstly, that moral beauty is stamped by the independent judgment of all mankind, even where it is but sparingly admitted into practice, as the highest form of excellence, and therefore as the

highest test of survival and as the end to which progress must ideally be considered as tending ; secondly, that the conditions under which it secures its reward are, as a matter of fact, largely realized in the present day, and that the certainty with which they are so realized has always been regarded as the proper test of the excellence of a society. It will now be shown that moral survival is not only possible, but that some form of it is absolutely indispensable in every society ; and, further, that the other forms of excellence are themselves dependent for their highest reward upon an admixture of moral excellence.

As to the contention that an element of moral survival is indispensable, it will easily be seen that in the least-advanced society existence would be impossible if some form of self-restraint were not practised, if some limit were not placed to the attempt to secure personal advantage by physical force or intellectual fraud. Within the limits of a society physical and intellectual egoism must be tempered by some consideration of others, however small ; and this consideration of others is a form of moral survival. Finally, it is in union with moral excellence that the other forms of survival secure their highest reward. Though it has been necessary, for the purpose of theoretical antithesis, to range moral survival in an opposite category to that of physical and intellectual, yet this opposition, though frequently occurring to a greater or less extent, in fact, does not preclude the possibility of a perfect harmony among

these qualities. The admiration of mankind, which is the basis on which each separately works, and to which is due by far the greater portion of their result, is naturally concentrated with a more intense earnestness on a union of these qualities than on any of them taken separately. Moral excellence has this grand pre-eminence, that it may be conjoined with all other types of excellence, and legitimately combine the admiration which they may win with the admiration which it may win on its own account alone. For besides its own intrinsic merit, if combined with intellectual and other perfections, it enlists them in its service, and, turning them from merely personal ends, directs them to the service of humanity, and obtains a double title to the gratitude of the world, first for the possession of genius, and, secondly, for the disposition that turns it to an unselfish end. As none are injured by the antagonistic display of superior qualities, the combined admiration for moral as well as any other perfection that may be conjoined, is the ready tribute of the world. Moral beauty is the crown of all other excellences, the perfect setting that shows them to the greatest advantage.

But perhaps the conception of this change will be rendered easier if it be remembered that there is one portion of society which owes its social existence to a form of moral survival, and whose moral influence can never at any time have been wholly unfelt. For, unnoticed in the ruder stages of moral evolution, but still ever present throughout the story of the world, is the type and

emblem of human gentleness, woman. The course of history sweeps on, its crises succeed and are described, and yet one half of all humanity plays no active part. Thrust to one side in the march of history, in the fierce struggle of society against society and of man against man, woman eventually finds her account as the crowning influence of human evolution. That principle towards which evolution tends, which alone gives a meaning to life, and which will rise into ever-increasing prominence as the morality of the world progresses, is the principle which woman represents.


From the ceaseless roar of conflict and the devilish cruelty of man the student of history turns at times with an unutterable sickness of heart and a despair of the higher destinies of the race. Yet in the darkest times there is a hope ; whatever principle of goodness may pervade the universe, it is not altogether without witness ; for that infinite compassion which would set the world at one woman even then possesses, and will possess until the end. The champion of an originally hopeless cause, she is eventually destined to share all the sweetness of its triumph. Man's pride is in his strength, of body and of intellect. But the occupation of mere physical strength is already gone ; the lingering spell of a lost supremacy is all that it now retains. And as for mind, in the first place it is yet to be proved that man's intellectual supremacy is the result of anything more than an unjust monopoly of all the opportunities of mental training ; while in the second place, for aught we know, the limits of genius

may one day have been reached, and the final impenetrability of things may mock the grander intellect of that day with a more bitter mockery than now. The work of genius in the perfection of human arrangements may be over too. But whatever fantastic possibilities we may conceive, we can conceive no state of things which will not be the better for gentleness and self-denial, and these are the traditional virtues, not of man, but of woman. Yet because she has attempted to antedate the normal cause of moral evolution, she is found guilty by nature's harsh decree and must suffer. Prevented from the full co-operation in the work of life and from the sterner discipline of the other sex, woman has been silently developing by a shorter method those qualities which are the evolutionary end and aim of man's louder, fiercer, and more glorious existence. Instead of a competition in methods of inflicting injury, there results competition in the methods of doing good, in a narrow sphere, perhaps, for no more has been left, but with a devotion which man can never rival. It would go hard with human ideals at the hands of mankind in general if they were not sometimes objectively realized, and it is to woman that man owes this objective realization in all ages of the highest forms of moral beauty. It is not, indeed, possible that this quality in woman should have been won in the way that it has been won without a price, and that ages of cruelty and injustice should not have left correlative faults. Yet the wonder is that nature has not taken a more signal revenge. Wronged

in early ages as the drudge and victim of man, wronged in more civilized times by denial of the means of self-improvement, wronged at the present day by the pressure of an unequal moral standard, woman persistently requites society with good for its evil, and keeps before the world a continuous example of that great human end towards which the mightiest genius is but a humble means.

It will thus be seen that the law of natural selection fulfils itself in all the different periods. In each period the individual who is best calculated to shine in that form of excellence admired by society tends to survive, the penalty of failing in the attainment of the given standard being want of harmony with surrounding conditions, entailing various degrees of discouragement ranging from mere unpopularity to loss of liberty or life. It will thus be seen that the social sanction is the all-important factor, and it is only in proportion as the ideal conceived by a separate individual mind coincides with the general ideal of the given society that it can be expected to be beneficial to its possessor. For it is to be remarked that the species of survival which characterizes a civilized epoch differs from merely animal survival in this—that a greater importance is to be attributed not so much to the hereditary transmission of qualities as to the strong motives brought to bear upon each individual to endeavour, as far as possible, to attain the form of excellence in repute, and to make the most of such parts and predispositions as are in accordance with

the required type. The social sanction, that is, creates a demand for one kind of excellence more than another, and puts a premium on its production, and though heredity assists, it is of less importance than where the required type of excellence is more stable. But as in the process of natural selection among animals change of condition is necessarily fatal to certain individuals, those who, in the change from one type of social excellence to another, inaugurate the new era run the risk entailed by want of harmony with the conditions which they alone see to be ephemeral, and not consistent with the highest display of power of which the society or the human race may conceivably be capable. The pioneers of any new movement are exposed to the greatest dangers, and it is for this reason, because it ushers in an ideal which all prophetically see to be correct, yet which the community will not accept, that martyrdom is invested with its peculiar and thrilling interest. Therefore, before the change can become general, the new ideal must have taken sufficient hold upon the imagination to pervade the social medium ; for the impulse towards the general cultivation of any species of excellence comes from outside rather than from the individual, results from the reactive influence of the social organism upon its parts. Such are the three stages through which evolution passes. Such are the forms which the residuum of individual antagonism assumes after the fiercer manifestation of antagonism has passed into international relations.



Turning once more, after these considerations, to the theory which represents the rivalry of nations as performing the same work for nations which the struggle for existence does amongst individuals, it will be found that the facts of history are not warranted to bear out this view. The rivalry of nations will be found to exemplify the first, and the first only, of the three stages, giving results of physical survival alone. The social organism follows the first law of physical survival, and the resultant is the outcome of superior force. It is not the most intellectual, still less the most moral, nation that survives, but the nation whose victories in the field are most frequent, whose methods of wielding force are most efficient. Perhaps it may be objected that the rise of commerce introduces a fresh element of competition between nations. But commerce as a test of superiority only exists on sufferance, for when a question really comes to issue between two nations, it is war alone that decides the result, and the only advantage which commerce can hope to effect is to remedy in some measure by the increase of wealth the lost efficiency in military tactics. A successful battle does more to ensure the permanence of a national type than years of improvement in the arts of peace; while, on the other hand, premature industrialism on the part of nations is as fatal as premature altruism on the part of individuals, for the result in either case is to court the aggression of an unscrupulous adversary. If, again, it be argued that the permanence of a national type is ensured more by

colonizing genius than by victory in the field or by "toughness of social tissue," as Mr. Leslie Stephen says, it can be confidently answered that both these qualities are illustrations of physical survival, for if the intellect comes into play it is but subsidiary to the use of force, and has no title to consideration on its own merits alone. Colonizing genius is merely the art of unjustly dispossessing a weaker occupant. Trace the history of any single colony formed where there have already been inhabitants, and tales of oppression and barbarity will be found to occupy the real bulk of the narrative. The moral complacency of pious Englishmen and Englishwomen might well be shaken by the real history of the extension of our trade and dominions, were it not for the different standard of judgment and comparison of moral principle in international matters, of which so much has already been said.

If, then, we say of nations that the fittest survives, we are stating one of two things—either the important truth that those nations survive who do survive, or that those survive who have the best military organization. But that this necessarily implies a conformity to the other standards of excellence, no one who has grasped the ambiguity of the phrases we have discussed will for a moment maintain. Say what we will, we cannot blind ourselves to the fact that in international conflict there is nothing to prevent the stamping out of the more by the less advanced civilization. Though modern improvements in the art of war may have placed us beyond the

reach of barbarians, yet where modern improvements are more universally possessed, what will prevent the more barbarous from becoming victorious ?

If indeed the struggle of nations follows the same course that marks the progress in the struggle of individuals, and passes from physical to intellectual and moral tests of excellence, there may be some hope for the distant future of mankind. Though we have no positive assurance, judging from the past history of mankind, that such will be the case, yet such a hope, which has hitherto always been regarded as peculiar to visionaries and dreamers, may perhaps, as will subsequently be shown, be legitimately and scientifically cherished. But, meanwhile, the phenomenon of international conflict stands out in history as an incessant and terrible testimony to the power of circumstance over the wishes and principles of individual nature. For that condition of things which dispassionate individual judgment, as evidenced in literature, has at all times wished to secure, it has been utterly unable to bring about, and the test of physical violence yet remains as the only real method of settling international disputes.

CHAPTER VI.

MORALITY AND PROGRESS.

THE antagonism of social organisms is thus seen to be a constant feature in the history of the world, and the prospect of amelioration is from any point of view distant and uncertain ; it will also subsequently be shown that such an antagonism is inevitable in the sense that it is a constantly recurring law of moral composition. Yet to lay too great stress on this moral anomaly is to fall into the mistake of regarding morality too entirely from the point of view of highly developed moral conditions, and to lose sight of the fact that in tracing the evolution of morals, conditions which are now but obstructions to the development of a higher morality may at one time have been absolute prerequisites of any moral advance whatever.

We have already seen how the change from isolated to combined family and tribe life necessarily involves the change from egoism to altruism ; a change from a condition in which, except during the education of the young, self is the only consideration, to a condition in which the claims of others demand at least as much

regard as is needed to ensure the welfare of the community in the face of common danger. Man as the member of a society must have the opinions and desires of that society continually confronting and opposing his individual wishes, where those wishes tend to issue in acts contrary to the good of the community. He can no longer act for himself alone, but must also take into consideration the society of which he is a part, if he wish to avoid the penalty of non-survival consequent in varying degrees upon a want of harmony with his surroundings. These changes in his moral attitude are significant of other changes intimately connected, or rather of a total change which the absorption of his individuality as one among many other component units of a new social individuality necessarily brings about. As one of the units of a social organism, he partakes in a measure of the nature of all around him, he is part of the "social tissue," and subject to the changes in the social organism. In a word, the law of individual development has become subordinate to the law of social development. Of this truth a more detailed proof is necessary. It has been already shown that the law of the survival of the fittest requires restatement when applied to conditions of civilized life. There is another point of view from which its failure to coincide with human phenomena is apparent.

Most of the scientific world is already aware of the confusion of thought in which popular opinion and many advanced thinkers have become involved, in trying to harmonize the theory of the individual survival of the

fittest with the belief in the growth and decay of nations—in endeavouring, that is, to hold simultaneously a belief in the steady transmission of increasing ability, and a belief in the total failure of such transmission throughout large bodies of men at a given period of their history. Obviously there is a contradiction here, for with national decay individual development is also arrested and retrogrades, and consequently the progress of the world cannot be from individual to individual in a continually ascending scale. For if, as the popular theory assumes, men tend to inherit and improve upon the excellences of their fathers, how comes it that so many nations in history have deteriorated—that the Italians are inferior to the Romans, and the degeneracy of the modern Greeks a commonplace in literature? Plain as the inference from this method of stating the case may seem, it is still impossible to doubt the action of a general law promoting the survival of those who excel physically, intellectually, or morally. But though the fact of national degeneracy is so important and its causes so intricate that they will long tax the world for solution, yet so strong a theoretical conviction of the universality of this law has been generated by the study of individual cases that these exceptions and contradictions, or rather, this law of contradiction, has been almost absolutely disregarded.

This mistake has its apology in the fact that the law of survival is under certain conditions assured, and that the only error has been a too hasty application to

advanced evolutionary conditions of a law formulated from the phenomena of the lower organic world. To apply the law in this way is to leave out of sight the vast moral and psychological difference between man and the lower animals, and to disregard more especially the fact that man is no longer a mere individual, but also the unit of a social organism. If the transmission of hereditary qualities is seen, at a given period in a nation's history, to cease in the face of all the proof that has been adduced for this law, we cannot conclude that the law is false, but are driven to the conclusion that its action is suspended by the operation of some other law with which it comes in conflict; the law of individual progress must be subordinate to the law of national progress. Antagonism and individual survival continue, but the standard required to ensure that survival is lowered. This truth, if in one way it has been denied by the attribution of too great a generality to the law of descent, has in another, but perhaps inadequate, way long been recognized. That a man is the creature of the age in which he lives has become a commonplace, though the real importance of the admission has hardly been noticed—that a limit is set to individual capacity by the state of contemporary national thought. And though in solitary instances a man may be regarded as beyond his time, as antedating the normal process of thought, yet in this very fact of the powerlessness of individual opinion to make itself understood or to issue in general action is contained the truth which the instance is sup-

posed to overthrow. The individual development of man, the member of a society, must proceed *pari passu* with the average of that society, or else be out of harmony with it. Perhaps we may say that the development of his individual line of descent, could the conditions be supplied for its continuous progress, would contain gigantic possibilities; but, unfortunately, the tardiness of that average rate at which the national life develops denies the necessary conditions.

The law of individual progress must therefore be sought, not in the individual, but in the society. The laws of social growth and decay will contain the laws of individual capability, or will at least show what conditions are necessary to allow of the highest individual capacity, and what conditions negative the attainment of any extraordinary excellence by the individual.

But the laws of social growth and decay are yet to seek, and it may be long indeed before they are thoroughly analyzed. No attempt at solution will here be made. All that can here be shown is that the individual is dependent on the society for his great moral and intellectual impulses; that is, he is dependent on the social organism for his psychological development. And though his physical growth and decay, his life and his death, are, since he is but a unit, independent of similar changes in the social organism, yet such is the influence of the psychological part of a man's nature on his physical, that when certain deep social causes change the aims of a community from higher to lower, the

deterioration of the moral side of national life seems to be accompanied or shortly followed by a corresponding deterioration in physical characteristics.

Individual atoms, by combining to form a new species of organism, have thereby rendered themselves conformable to the laws of the movement of that organism, as well as to the laws which would be imposed by their own individual nature. If the fact that man is a member of a society has any influence upon his conduct—and enough has already been said to establish the strongest presumption that such is the case—then the influence which society possesses over its members, examined and formulated, will give us moral forces which act upon the individual independently of the individual.

When evolution tended to the formation and consolidation of families, civilization and morality were assured. The fact that the change did take place is beyond doubt, and this fact is a sufficient basis for reasoning. Antagonism, the supreme law of the organic world, takes from this moment a direction which, while fully satisfying antagonistic instincts, yet at the same time initiates a directly opposite movement. The antagonism of societies, the new phenomenon in the organic world, implies a certain harmony of aim between the individuals of these antagonistic societies.

With social combination begin the phenomena not only of moral obligation, the claims of others, the necessity of a rule of life which will take account of the

wishes of others, but also the record of all that emotional, intellectual, and active life which separates civilization from brutality. It has been shown that any attempt to prove the beneficial results of race-conflict on an hypothesis of national survival of the fittest necessarily fails from the ambiguity of the word "fittest," which, between nations under present and past conditions, means the strongest or militarily fittest, a condition which by no means necessarily implies those intellectual and moral qualities requisite for the happiness of the world. But there is a benefit resulting from the conflict of societies which goes far to extenuate the obliquity of vision with which moralists have at all times regarded the phenomenon of social conflict. To impress clearly the necessity of mutual dependence of individuals on one another, the pressure of external hostility is a necessary condition in the history of morality. That social conflict has this result is beyond a doubt; nor are such considerations out of place even in the rudest and apparently most barbarous times. One necessary element in morality, and so ingrained in the consciousness of many as to make them scorn the idea of a happiness in morality, has clearly been produced by conflict; and this is the submission to painful discipline, in order to correct the natural tendency to self-indulgence, to replace primitive selfish instincts by a trained habit of thought fitted for the demands of society.

It might at first be supposed that such an attitude is indicative of a comparatively advanced state of society,

where some progress has been made in studying the problems of existence and the relation of man to his fellows. But the study of the savage life of the North American Indians shows a system of discipline for a tribal purpose, a distinctly conceived end, more carefully carried out than the usual moral training of much more advanced civilization. Because the desires of a tribe at such a period of civilization are less complex than those of a society of a higher type, being simply and solely pre-eminence in war, the discipline required to ensure the given end is none the less a moral training, and, indeed, shows to advantage as compared with the apparently aimless asceticisms to which men belonging to much more advanced civilizations have from time to time submitted. The imposition of such a moral training is directly due to the necessities of national self-preservation—that is, of race-conflict. If, then, at so early and barbarous a period of human evolution as that of which the North American civilization is typical, tribal antagonism can produce in the internal relations of tribes a distinctly high species of morality, this fact alone is sufficient to show the vast importance of the antagonism of combinations in the history of morality.

Man as a social being requires, for the full development of his individuality, a vivid consciousness of the good of the community as distinct from though involving his own, and in proportion as this feeling is active or dormant does individual ability seem to be evoked or remain hid. Whatever else may contribute to arouse

individual activity, this much is observed fact—that it has never been developed to any extent when a national consciousness has been absent. The history of this feeling of nationality and of the brotherhood of man with man within the limits of a community is neither more nor less than the history of national conflict. Wherever we look we see in the train of fierce national contentions, in the struggle to assert national existence and national independence, civilization, progress, and moral endeavour springing up. Not only is there a general and indisputable connection between civilization and war, but it has been more particularly observed that at certain periods of a nation's history individual activity starts into play in all directions as the immediate sequence of some great national movement. Individual greatness is evoked or disappears in proportion to national self-consciousness. Individual talents of the most varied description, having no use in the military decision of national superiority, are yet, by the action of a great external stimulus, called into play among nations whose individuals were formerly content to win an occasional place in the lower ranks of genius. On the other hand, deprive a country of its occupation and supremacy of whatever kind, and no longer through its individuals does it lead the intellectual world, though the influence which destroyed its national occupation does not necessarily shut its individuals out from artistic and intellectual triumphs. It is on these grounds, as Mr. Seely ("The Expansion of England," lect. vi. p. 100)

has shown, that the change of the centre of appearance for great names in the sixteenth century is to be explained. As more striking instances of the same truth, take Athens after the repulse of Persia, and England after the defeat of the Spanish Armada. The pride of attempt and achievement, the joy in living and doing, which followed these great movements produced in Athens the most memorable epoch in the world's history, and in England an awakening which culminated in the production of a drama ranking among the first in the world. Wide as is the difference between military achievement and imaginative art, yet with the sense of national power inspired by the one goes the possibility of individual achievement in the other.

Perhaps the objection may be urged that even if it be admitted that national conflict is productive of progress and civilization, yet progress and civilization are not morality. But, to begin with, if progress is not morality, yet everybody will admit that somehow it is nearer akin to morality than stagnation. Progress may not be morality, but it undoubtedly contains a moral element. A progressive community elicits the approval of a distinctly moral sentiment more than an unprogressive, and that too not only where other things are equal, but even where the manifestation of a brisk national vitality is accompanied by a tendency to disregard the individual rights of an opposing section of humanity.

Again, though it cannot be said that the internal morality of states is greatest at the time of the greatest

national activity of the state—for morality is largely dependent on internal organization and the administration of justice, details which are generally more elaborated late in a nation's career—yet there is present, at the time spoken of, a moral element which more than compensates for the better organized relations of more civilized but less energetic times. The mechanism of justice may be improved consistently with a decline in the harmony of individual desires, and the idea and, as it were, potential existence of morality is separable from the appliances and enactments for securing that morality. If it cannot be said that the periods of greatest national energy coincide with those of greatest actual morality, the reverse is at least certain—that when national decline has set in, immorality of all kinds, whether as cause or effect, accompanies and marks the change. The decay of private virtue and public spirit are phenomena of co-existence so well ascertained as to have passed into rhetorical commonplace. It is, then, of the greatest importance for the evolutionary moralist to investigate this element in national life, which by its presence or absence influences the morality of all individuals composing the nation. He must endeavour to ascertain what it is that would cause us to refuse the attribute of a high morality to certain nations such as the Esquimaux or Chinese, were justice never so impartially distributed among them, if their life at the same time continued lacking in that element which constitutes progress. We should, in that case, characterize their morality as

negative rather than positive, as abstinence from evil rather than activity in good, and it is for moral science to explain the possible grounds of such a judgment ; to show, in fact, what is the connection between morality and progress.

It seems as if the solution were to be found in the paradoxical moral elements, which, as has already been said, are exhibited in the phenomena of international conflict. The conclusion to which the empirical study of historical fact points, namely, that, in spite of the certainty that war is but an exhibition on a gigantic scale of man's inhumanity to man, it is yet found to leave a balance of good behind it, is substantiated by an examination of the moral significance of war from an evolutionary standpoint. *Multis utile bellum* has an application wider than its first propounder ever dreamt of in his philosophy. There is this wide separation between individual and national conflict, there is this huge moral advance in proceeding from individual to tribal violence, that, however barbaric the primary instinct which urges societies against one another, it cannot rob either of the opposed communities of the consciousness that each individual is sacrificing his life for the good of all. It has been said that war is the nursery of self-devotion, and this is one of the grand elements which covers such a multitude of sins, and diverts attention from the anomalies of the case. So long as morality is self-contained in opposed political centres, the view of the individual is bounded by the

welfare of the community of which he forms a part, and the action of those communities upon one another, being the special care of none, passes for the most part unregarded. Studying human nature and the world as it is presented to us in history, and having regard to the necessary conditions of evolution, it may well be doubted whether, without the stimulus of inter-tribal conflict, that junction-point of savagery and its opposite, human progress and civilization could ever have taken place. The limitations as to the use of social conflict, the positive disadvantages which it may finally entail upon communities when they have learnt to be moral, are sufficiently obvious. But it would seem to be long before nations are ready to dispense with the lessons of stern discipline, which are at once the embodiment and suggestion of moral truth. Even when a nation has become a nation, a glance at the stagnating communities of history would show that it is fatally easy to attain a certain development and then to halt, even if a retrograde movement does not set in. Between the character of individuals composing non-progressive nations which have been fairly within reach of the means of civilization, and the character of individuals composing progressive nations, there is this broad difference—that the first are much more prone to self-indulgence of all sorts, be it merely the self-indulgence which avoids exertion. Without that spirit of rivalry between individuals which prompts each to show himself superior to the rest, it is evident that the progress of the nation must cease.

Periods of national decadence have always been marked by a growing tendency to sensual pleasure and habits of life which, aiming at immediate individual gratification, unfit the mind for the prosecution of distant aims requiring perpetual self-denial and effort. In other words, individual rivalry tends to cease, and the national character drifts toward that final phase of careless self-indulgence which unfits it for further struggle. Now, there may come a time in the history of nations when the lessons of national endeavour, though still going on, cease to have their full influence ; it may be admitted too that there are undiscovered causes of national decay which the friction of communities is powerless to counteract ;—that the friction of communities is not beneficial to all, for some are swept away and destroyed in the process. Yet without asserting that social conflict necessarily leads to and ensures civilization, it may be maintained that without it in the past history of the world morality and progress would have been impossible ; for it is in the conflict and rivalry of nations that the similar source of both morality and progress is to be found.

Morality is not due to conflict alone, nor yet is progress ; but the conflict of social bodies, taking place under given conditions of the human mind, is one of the most important factors in the production of morality and the acceleration of progress. Whatever other causes there may be in operation assisting both processes, it may safely be asserted of both morality and progress that self-devotion, though in somewhat different forms, is the

essence of the one and the other ; the good of the community is the meeting-point of both. Now, it is in national struggles that the highest and earliest type of self-devotion is to be found, the giving of life itself for others. In this act, which is not the result of moral premeditation, but the necessary sequence of an invariable phenomenon, social antagonism, and which is therefore common to all states of society and to all times, there resides an after-significance which we cannot but think must be present in some degree to the rudest types of human society. Thus, wherever rival societies have existed, there has existed too, potentially, as we may say, the germ of morality, wanting but a fitting intellectual atmosphere for its development. From the grim approval of the savage mind for whom courage is the only virtue, we pass by insensible degrees to the nobler sentiment of a more civilized time, till we reach a state of society where patriotism and the love of liberty have a passionate force, and where the example of those that give their lives for their country thrills through every heart. As to morality, the moral of such action forms, in a thousand homes, the very basis of national education and the keynote of all healthy moral life. To forget self in the claims of others, wholly and unreservedly, without utilitarian forethought or afterthought, has through all time been felt to be the very essence of morality, and it is this element which has always baffled the attempts of moralists to reduce self-devotion into that class of actions which are avowedly utilitarian.

If it be asked, What has self-devotion in war, a purely moral phenomenon, to do with such a very different matter as progress in the arts and sciences, and the material well-being of communities? the answer is, that the nature of the finer races is happily so constituted that the emulation of achievement, and of that noblest form of all achievement, self-sacrifice, is a motive capable of quickening the whole range of life. There arises in the hearts of all but the most contemptible of mankind at the sight possibly, or at least at the recital, of some great deed, an unbidden emotion, which, when realized in thought and rendered into language, is the precept, "Go thou and do likewise." Each individual in his separate department feels the call to lift himself from his unnoticed path into the thoughts of men, and even if in a thousand hearts the seed thus scattered prove barren and unproductive, there are always found some where it will spring up into action and imperiously evoke imitation. Even to hear of death confronted in a noble cause begets temporarily a wild strange love for mankind, such as seems permanently to have characterized the great moral heroes of the world. The echoing response called up by the heroism which is displayed in national conflict is a perpetually animating cause of subsequent great action. For the impulse of resulting enthusiasm never ceases to beat upon the individual nature, and ere the vibrations of one such peal have died away, those of another succeed. And though the knowledge of great deeds need not of necessity issue

in immediate action, yet they leave a memory like a slumbering fire, which the gentle breezes of prosperity do not extinguish, and which the blast of adversity may raise to the glow of heroic determination. For even if individual success seem far beyond the horizon of possibility, yet in a manly heart the conviction remains that it were well to struggle, as those before us have struggled, in the battle of life, if only to fail nobly at the last.

From this great source comes an incentive to individual effort in whatever direction predisposition or opportunity may direct. The nature of a moral motive, as there will afterwards be reason to show, depends largely upon the nature of the individual to whom that motive is supplied, and different individuals may find in one and the same act a widely differing significance ; or, again, the same motive may appeal with a different force to the same individual at different times. The highest motive which the contemplation of heroism can call forth is an exact imitation ; and in such cases experience, both of ourselves and of others, shows that this desire to deserve well of our kind arises by virtue of some subtle human magnetism, instantaneous in operation and without personal calculation of result.

And though it may be argued that self and not others, egoism and not altruism, is and must be, when we strike the balance of a given life, the mainspring of individual action, over which the other motive sheds but a fitful irradiating gleam, yet it still remains true that heroic example, and the education based upon it, is

capable of directing even self-interest into such paths as shall make the good done to the community the title to personal welfare and reputation.

To be content with nothing short of the very highest principle of conduct is a rule which holds nowhere except in the philosopher's study ; and the evolutionist who regards the actual facts of life as well as the practical man may thankfully take account of much that falls infinitely short of the Kantian maxim. The personal and self-regarding element can never be altogether eliminated, and may conceivably, as a desire for posthumous renown, be present even in the final act of self-devotion to death. Yet the egoistic theory cannot strictly be maintained of those greater achievements of which we have been speaking as accelerated by national rivalries. They have had for their aim the extension of the well-being of the community, a non-selfish end, or, in the case of the arts and sciences, have occasionally risen to a comprehensiveness including all mankind.

But with less than such an aim we may well be content. For even those who have more strictly proposed their own personal aggrandizement as the end and aim of their lives, are examples of a relatively high self-denial and morality. For it must never be forgotten that from the earliest childhood all are tempted to obey the dictates of their lower nature, and it is only by discipline that by far the greater portion of mankind learn the necessity of self-denial, and are taught to shun

the ever-present alternative of self-indulgence. But this discipline is itself the tradition of an active community instructed by national rivalry in the method of properly training citizens. It is by such discipline, and the example that is continually reanimating it, mutually reacting, that even superabundant selfishness may be turned to the good of the community. To undertake and achieve a mere personal end, such as the attainment of wealth, presupposes a nature either by inheritance or training fitted for undergoing long self-denial; for it is only the long self-denial of the child and youth that can gratify even the self-regarding ambition of the man. Those forms of selfishness which presuppose a distant aim are to be preferred to those which seek immediate gratification, for they imply a self-discipline which has a distinct moral value. And further, a man, even if he wish it, cannot wholly separate his aims and prevent them from having a relation to the aims of those around; for social cohesion, almost from the first, implies that a man who seeks his own welfare with any hope of success must in some particular seek that of the community as well. But the undisciplined nature of the average man is unable to effect even this object. The requirements of society apparently change quicker than the individual nature of man; for that nature, if left to itself, is unadapted for the work of a civilized community. The uneducated instinct of the overwhelming majority is such that, if left to take its course in childhood, it totally unfits the possessor for effective co-operation in the

work of society. Hence any advance which means self-mastery, fitting a man to be a greater benefit to himself and his community than he would be if left at the mercy of instincts which have grown pernicious, any effort which means self-adaptation to new social needs, however poor it may seem when tested by the higher moral criterions, is, from the evolutionary standpoint, a moral gain. The long and arduous pursuit of any distant end, be it even the selfish pursuit of power, of wealth, or of fame, is indicative of that love of achievement which characterizes those communities which have in history been most active in the struggle for national existence.

Perhaps it may be argued against the whole position here taken up that the imitation of a career of fortunate self-aggrandizement is intelligible on grounds of "praiseworthy self-love;" but to argue that men are attracted by a self-destructive form of conduct, is to deny the operation of one of the most primary instincts of organic life, self-preservation. Any violent form of attraction, it would naturally seem, must have a self-regarding object, except in the schemes of visionaries, who build their hopes in defiance of the facts of selfish human nature. Yet the fact remains that forms of self-sacrifice possess a fascination which defies egoistic analysis, and far exceeds in the intensity of its power the influence exercised by any forms of successful and selfish ambition. So important, however, is the law of self-preservation to any evolutionary theory of morality that some explanation of its disappearance must be offered. Where

imagination is willingly enthralled by acts of heroic self-denial, it is a species of absurdity to argue that selfishness is the mainspring of such emotions, since they do not lead to self-preservation.

The real solution of this phenomenon is, beyond all doubt, to be sought in the change of direction in the law of self-preservation which necessarily accompanies the change in the direction of the law of antagonism. For in the phenomenon of the self-devotion of individuals in national conflict it is evident that we have proof that the law of the self-preservation of the individual has given way to the law of the self-preservation of the community, in obedience to which individuals willingly encounter a danger which they otherwise would shun.

This instinct it is the evident interest of every society to foster in the utmost degree. The opinions of men given collectively refer to their collective interests, and before the interest of the society the interest of the individual gives way. The first injunction laid by a rising and ambitious community upon its youth, the incessant burden of their education, is self-sacrifice in war. From the earliest period of reflection the duty of self-devotion for their country is presented as an ideal of conduct which will win the admiration of the world. Education is the voice of the community speaking to its individual members, and necessarily setting the highest value on tendencies which ensure its own survival. To win the admiration of mankind is the strongest and noblest form of egoism, and if duly nurtured by the

community, is sufficient to efface the difference between present and posthumous renown, and to bridge the logical gap between the injunction "Live for self" and the injunction "Live for others."

But, again, it is unnecessary to reduce the phenomenon of self-sacrifice to a form of individual selfishness, even a selfishness of the noblest kind. For there can be no doubt that this instant appreciation of the beauty of heroism is due to a deep psychological connection of the individual with the social organism. As has already been observed, what we applaud in the self-denial of others is not the conduciveness of such acts to our own benefit, but the existence and illustration of instincts which are part of our own nature, and on which we know all human thought to have set the stamp of the highest worth. Nor in so saying is anything mystical attributed to their origin, for such instincts, as Mr. Spencer has shown, are among the first of evolutionary phenomena, and their repetition and especial cultivation in social evolution is but the natural sequence of the part they have played in individual evolution. Therefore, the instinct awakened by heroism may be accounted as pure as the most rigid intuitionist could wish. But, as has been remarked, it does not therefore follow that an exactly similar impulse is carried into practice: individual egoism is a great fact of evolution, and, while race-conflict induces a suspension of this law, which for the individuals actually concerned is only temporary, for those who are but spectators a greater influence

cannot reasonably be demanded. In the latter case, its chief function is to purify their normal egoism and raise their aims. There are, in fact, two motives by which men may be deeply stirred—firstly, by direct appeal to the love they bear their fellow-creatures ; and, secondly, by an appeal to the more self-regarding energy within them. It is of the impulse given both to the spirit of love and to the spirit of antagonism that we have been speaking, for it is by a species of emulation that both are evoked. Great deeds have the power of touching the one impulse or the other, according to the nature to which the appeal is made. The same motive which stirs one man to direct effort for the sake of others, stirs another to effort for his own sake, by awakening the nobler spirit of antagonism within him, and urging him to confront and conquer difficulties by which he might else have been overcome. Upon this impulse to the spirit of antagonism a few more words may now be said.

It would appear to be the inevitable result of evolution that life should present the idea not only of a struggle of nation with nation, and of man with man, but of every individual with himself. For we are born with instincts which are out of date, and we find ourselves compelled, partly at the risk of being out of harmony with surrounding conditions, and partly by an intellectual impulse which bids us hasten such existing tendencies as promise a better future, to assist in the replacement of such useless and pernicious instincts by

other instincts which are consistent with the possibility of a higher development. And thus the idea of antagonism has, by an emotional metaphor, been transferred from the region of physical and intellectual survival throughout the whole range of moral action. All moral and religious allegory presents itself under the form of a battle and a strife ; all mental presentation of moral duties takes the same form. It is the antagonistic element in character which frequently sustains the silent heroism of many an unknown moral struggle. Death, which confronts all human effort as its necessary termination, and as the last and greatest demand which circumstance can make upon the individual, is continually present in idea as the test of earnestness supplied by each individual to himself. That frenzied determination which, without absolute necessity, has continually hurried religious enthusiasts into defiance of death, and which at all times and in all minds has its counterpart in that passionate desire, the culminating crisis of long moral suffering, to sever by some great stroke the Gordian knot of life's moral mystery, cannot but be evolutionally connected with the struggle of societies. For in periods of moral exaltation death for some great cause has always seemed the simplest solution of the moral difficulties and casuistries with which great minds have been unceasingly beset, and the noblest response to all that can at any time be demanded of human agents.

Again, that disposition of mind which race-conflict

assists in creating, race-conflict alone is frequently able to satisfy. In the minds of many whose lot has not been cast in periods which require such heroism, the desire of a definite field for great moral action is continually felt. Under no circumstances is this double object of a cause to uphold and a definite evil to combat more easily attainable than where the life is staked, and for an object immemorially sacred—a country's cause; and thus it is that war has at all times seemed to many the noblest of all employments, and the consciousness of the purity of motive with which it has been undertaken has been more than sufficient to obliterate the thought of the evil which it necessarily inflicts. Where the idea of heroism has first been evoked, where self-sacrifice has first been extensively practised, and where antagonism has found its noblest issue, it is natural that the combination of these three ideas should be most perfectly developed; and thus it comes about that, though originally the effect of war, they eventually cause its perpetuation by the outlet offered to the need for heroic action. And therefore we not unnaturally find that the first living authority on war* holds that the desire for the cessation of war is not only an idle dream, but a bad dream, as tending to rob mankind of the chiefest cause of noble action. Yet however valuable its influence in increasing that spirit of individual rivalry which is the secret of progress, if the advance of mankind is always to be purchased at such a price, the world

* Count von Bismarck.

may well pause to count the cost ; and though it is the object of this chapter to prove such a connection, it by no means follows that such a method will at all times be necessary in the world's history.

But it is not again necessary to reopen a subject which is elsewhere sufficiently discussed. It has already been shown that race-antagonism has a reactionary influence on individual effort through the noblest of all motives—the desire to imitate self-sacrifice ; also that it has a further influence of a relatively high moral value in suggesting the substitution of larger and more distant personal aims than those of immediate gratification. Now, though this result may be brought about by a species of imitative self-denial, it is probably more frequently due to the direct influence which the spectacle of race-antagonism has upon individual antagonism, urging the individual to a similar competition with those with whom he comes in contact. The interconnection of these ideas of individual and race antagonism appears to be, in a measure, exemplified in that keen desire for achievement which is frequently awakened by the sight of marching squadrons and the sound of martial music. At such a sight the battle-instinct of bygone generations, the joy in conflict of the fierce and hardy ancestors of the race, awakes once more, and bids those who are debarred from participation in the actual physical struggle of race with race, and cannot, like the soldier, offer their lives for the honour of their country's name, at least embody the lesson that is taught in some

portion of their lives, and hold themselves contemptible if in other and not less difficult struggles they shrink from difficulty and danger, though at first it seem insurmountable.

And thus it is that, if the lesson is read aright, the spirit of individual antagonism is aroused into greater activity by the consideration of national enterprise, while at the same time the individual self-sacrifice which such national movements involve suggests a nobler aim than mere personal success, and a better object than merely the discomfiture of those immediately around us.

There is now to be considered an objection to a theory which connects the progressive impulse in any given race with the phenomenon of social conflict. "A great conquering nation," says Mr. Seeley, "is not usually advanced in civilization. The typical conqueror is some Cyrus or Zenghis Khan—that is, the chieftain of some hardy tribe that has been steeled by poverty and is tempted by plunder. Before such a conqueror the advanced civilization is apt to go down, so that in history we see civilization often conquered, sometimes holding its ground, but not often making great conquests, until in recent times the progress of invention strengthened it by giving it new weapons. The great conquering race of history has been one of the least progressive—the Turcomans."

The first thing to be remarked is that two distinct features of the question are here treated as one; and not unnaturally, considering the perpetual contradiction

which has beset the action of mankind in individual and international morality, and the profound obscurity which, in moral and historical works, reigns over the whole subject. The first relates to the advantage which barbarism, nationally speaking, may possess over civilization ; the second touches upon the relation between the warlike instinct and the spirit of progress in the minds of individuals of the same nation. But these two ideas must be carefully distinguished. It is one thing to say that the advanced civilization is apt to go down before barbarism ; it is quite another thing to say or imply that there is necessarily any opposition between the conquering spirit and the progressive spirit. For the first statement is true, and the second is not. As to the first statement, on which apparently most stress is laid, it has already been fully admitted. It has been already shown that between nations, as sometimes between individuals, the law of natural selection is at fault, and frequently ensures the non-survival of the fittest. Between nations military superiority, which is a form of physical survival, is the only test of excellence, while between the individuals composing the very nations which are submitting to this test, higher tests have come into play ; and consequently, though a given nation may win supremacy, it does not by any means follow that the individuals composing that nation are the fittest to carry on the work of civilization. Military efficiency, though it ensure the survival of the race by the race test, does not necessarily ensure the survival of that

organization which would be most beneficial to mankind.

With regard to the second of the two parts into which the objection quoted more properly falls, "that a great conquering race is not usually advanced in civilization," it may be answered with much greater truth and force that every nation advanced in civilization has been a great conquering nation to this extent, that it has not only maintained but extended its dominions in the presence of its rivals.

It is sufficient to leave it to the reader to decide whether Athenians, the Romans, the French, the English may not all legitimately be called both progressive and great conquering nations. With Mommsen's comparison between the history of Rome and of England before us, it is futile to suggest that there is any necessary connection between national fossilization and a warlike disposition. The utmost that can be allowed is that with some races the thirst for blood and plunder, necessarily engendered to some extent by war, may rise to such a pitch as to exclude the moral and heroic aspect of the case, and may destroy rather than further the moral advance of the nation. That there must be co-operating factors of individual disposition to ensure the beneficial effects of war is obvious, and has not been denied, since a confession of inability to assign the total causes of national progress and decay has already been registered.

Race-conflict of any sort must be regarded, from the evolutionary point of view, as an advance upon previous

forms of morality, since it implies a certain amount of cohesion. To enable race-conflict to conduce to a form of morality still higher, there must have been engendered along with it the disposition to find in it something more than a mere opportunity for plunder—a certain sympathy of nature between the individuals composing either side, and which it is sufficient here to regard, from the point of view of the social organism, as a structural advantage, leading to national success and development.

Therefore, though it may be admitted that inordinate love of conquest may sometimes get possession of a race, yet it by no means follows that war has not been, in the past history of evolution, a necessary factor in the development of the altruistic and of the progressive element in morality. The record of which every civilized nation has been most proud has always been the record of its victories, and the right of patriotism to place its heroes highest in the temple of national fame has never been disputed. Those who will recollect what a prominent place in the literature of educational morality is occupied with lessons of patriotism, who will recall the fact that in all ages the majority of examples for the moral education of the young has invariably been taken from the battle-field, cannot have a doubt of the intimate connection, at least in past history, of all noble effort with the conflict of societies.

CHAPTER VII.

MORALITY AND FORCE.

THERE is some difficulty in determining at what exact point evolutionary moral science shall begin. Granting the impossibility of separating any one step in evolution from any previous step in the actual history of the world, yet there is at the same time a necessary logical separation, as arbitrary, perhaps, as that between cause and effect, but necessary for the human intelligence. A morality can be traced in the organic world up to primordial beginnings ; wherever any species of sexual or parental relations occur we have the germ of morality. But human relations are all that moral science proper can afford to deal with, the rest being more properly regarded as preliminary investigation.

The distinctive feature of moral science is that the disposition of the parts of a social organism admits of a statement from the point of view of the individual units—a statement which, when at last it is correctly made, will be intelligible both from the point of view of the individual and the point of view of the social organism. What distinguishes the social organism from

other organisms is the fact that, rightly or wrongly, the component parts not only have an opinion of their own individual value, but carry this attitude so far as to regard the organism as existing for the sake of the parts, rather than the parts for the sake of the organism. Further, it is very apparent that this attitude on the part of the social units involves the further possibility that the separate social organisms will one day cease to exist. And as this separation would be in consequence of increased power of self-government on the part of the units, the universal organism which they might be supposed to form would need no central government; and having no bonds to link its parts except those of moral and economical dependence, would be still more unlike any known species of organism.

These considerations separate the social organism widely from others, and justify a certain difference of method in dealing with it. The social organism is, in a certain sense, abnormal, since it is not the necessary form into which all individual organisms fall in their relation with one another, but is a form peculiar to intelligent individual organisms. Among the lower animals there is no process whereby individual animals are converted into an animal social organism, evidently for want of that which forms the binding tissue of the human social organism—mind. It is, therefore, with the appearance of this distinctively human feature that moral science proper begins. When man begins to form in societies—and he must begin at some point in

his history—it is then that the real problem of human relations takes its rise.

Such an identification of the origin of society and morality is not new. The famous social contract theory combined the two ideas, and made the realization of morality dependent on the formation of societies ; and, so far from deserving the ridicule that has been heaped upon it, one form of this theory at least is, when taken in connection with the condition of contemporaneous thought, of much even scientific value. Its errors were the errors of the age, but the truth it contains as to the inseparability of the ideas and origin of morality and law from the formation, in whatever way, of society is, if anything, beyond the age, and will be better appreciated as moral science advances. True, societies are not artificial formations, but growths ; yet to look for an appreciation of this truth before the faintest conception of the real movements of societies was abroad, is to demand an anachronism in thought.

But the method by which this simultaneous origin of society and law was supposed to have come about being clearly impossible, it could not be made to yield any very satisfactory result. The mistake, of course, consisted in the endeavour to find the theoretical basis of a highly developed state of civil society in times in which the very conception of such a theoretical basis was impossible ; and consequently Locke's two treatises on government are, to modern readers, a monument of elaborate insufficiency, as against the simple facts adduced by

Filmer in his "Patriarcha," a work of infinitely inferior ability, and much more monstrous in its conclusions than Locke in his premisses.

Since the promulgation of the evolutionary hypothesis, the identity of the origin of morality and society presents itself in the light of an *à priori* necessity. The idea after which the supporters of the social contract theory were groping is now made apparent by the light which the theory of evolution throws on the appearance of man. Morality is from this point of view a relation or the abstract expression of certain relations, and must appear simultaneously with the appearance of those relations. The state of man or his progenitors before family cohesion took place, we have not the slightest reason for supposing to have been different from that of the rest of the animal world, and therefore must have been a state of individual antagonism. Thus we find the germ idea of the much-reviled "state of nature," which formed the basis of the contract theory invented by Hobbes, to be a necessary consequence of the theory of evolution. Starting from the Darwinian theory, it is evident that there must have been a period when the progenitors of the human race were subject to as little cohesion as the more advanced animals now. The cohesion of the family would then last only for such a period as would be necessary to fit offspring for self-maintenance, which offspring would then go forth into the world to regard their parents with the same antagonism as that with which they regard all

other organisms. At a later period of evolution, we find that individual antagonism has changed into the antagonism of opposing combinations. If, in answer to the question, What formed the combinations? it were answered, Antagonism, the argument would still not become altogether circular. But still some reason, however slight, is necessary for the initial cohesion of families, sufficient at once to mark and explain the divergence from merely animal conditions. That intellectual element which has assured the cohesion of men and their superiority over the rest of the animal world undoubtedly centres in the discovery of the art of conveying commands, and consequently ideas, by sound—in short, of language. The difficulty of conceiving the transitional stage between animality and humanity disappears largely when we reflect on the enormous additional power which would be gained in this way. The picture sometimes ironically suggested of primitive man inventing speech for his own use is, of course, nonsense. The faculty of speech, originating, like any other structural advantage, accidentally, united with an intelligence sufficient to connect ideas with sounds, and which accordingly need be no greater than that which we now find in many animals, would inevitably ensure the survival and facilitate the combination of the possessors. Much poetry has been expended upon the divine faculty of speech, yet it would be difficult to point out the divinity in the utterances of the domestic parrot. Even such a humble instance as this sweeps

away the *a priori* objection to the fortuitous origin of speech. For the importance of this single instance may be estimated by a consideration of what its absence would have implied. Were there no instance of an articulating animal, would not this have been considered, would it not have constituted, a formidable argument against the accidental origin of speech? The existence of such an instance is, however, as formidable an argument for as its absence would have been against the Darwinian theory of the descent of man.

Increase of mutual intelligence and sympathy through the development of speech is one of the first conditions of combination. As for the further conditions, though the parental and sexual instincts cannot fail to have had their influence in the history of morality, yet, seeing the want of durability evidenced in family affection throughout the animal world, it would be dangerous to attribute much to this sentiment, which wanes in proportion as we recede from civilization, and almost wholly disappears under conditions of animality.

Nor is much assistance to be gained from the kind of view which loosely describes such changes in human society as due to perception of "advantage derived," since such theories are competent only to account for the continuation, not the derivation, of the movement. Experience of advantage would teach men whether they liked a given state of things or no, but could not possibly lead them in the first instance to initiate that state of things. We are forced, then, to seek the operation of

some principle which shall be adapted to the age in which the change from comparatively isolated hostility to combination has taken place, and which, by the universality of its operation in moral phenomena, shall possess the value and generality of a moral law. This principle is again found in the law of antagonism.

We have seen, from a study of the moral phenomena of societies, that, in the absence of any other means of deciding disputed questions, force is the only available resource. Throughout the whole range of the phenomena of international relations recorded in history, force is the method used for deciding questions of right and wrong. But this method of regarding the question of right and wrong has been shown to be in reality a *ὑστέρων πρότερον*, the tendency to resort to force always preceding the question of right and wrong, which is, from the study of history, clearly seen to be an after-consideration. The rival proximity of two neighbouring nations or social bodies is in itself a sufficient reason for contest. Further, the reason given by international lawyers to explain the existence of international violence is the absence of a constraining force which shall be to nations as a government is to individuals. If so apparent a truth need substantiation, it is verified on every page of history, where the controlling power of some superior state has been the only efficient means of restraining the quarrels of inferior states.

Now, it has been argued in previous pages that the moral phenomena of nations and individuals give a

different result from apparently similar data. But it was at the same time remarked that this difference in result was accompanied by a certain difference in the conditions. The data are in either case in all respects similar with the exception of one prominent fact, present in the one case and absent in the other, a controlling power. There is, therefore, a strong presumption that this difference in result is connected with the presence and absence of a controlling power. Along with a controlling power in the case of individuals goes morality; with the absence of a controlling power goes immorality or violence. And, further, the presumption is substantiated by the conclusion of a trained body of thinkers who trace a causal connection between the two facts, and will presently be shown to be a legitimate result of the law of antagonism.

We are thus forced to substantially the same conclusion as that reached, by a different method, long ago by Hobbes, that "before the names of just and unjust can have place there must be some coercive power to compel men equally to the performance of their covenant, by the terror of some punishment greater than the benefit they expect by the breach of their covenant."

Probably the objection manifested to the moral opinions of Hobbes is animated more by aversion to his absurd conclusions as to the natural legitimacy of certain forms of government than by any actual flaw in the reasoning by which he substantiates his opinion as to

the relation of morality and force. Admitting that his general argument is vitiated by the same tendencies that are apparent in Locke, it is yet impossible that any one who keeps the facts of history and of daily life steadily before his eyes, and frankly faces them rather than wearies himself with metaphysical questions as to the nature of right and wrong, should refuse assent to the great philosopher, at least on this one opinion—that for the realization, the actual embodiment, of morality in practice a controlling power is necessary. Where the vigorous thought and incisive language of Hobbes has failed to carry conviction, it would seem simple arrogance to step in. Yet the humblest scientific worker has, in point of time, an advantage over his most illustrious predecessors, because of the advance of scientific thought, which has placed new weapons at his disposal, and cleared the ground for attack.

Mr. Spencer ("Data of Ethics," ch. iv. sect. 12), in commenting on the quotation just given, argues that such a statement implies a deficient sense of causation, and a blindness to the fact that the authority of law is derived, and he adds that "political subordination became established through experience of the increased satisfaction derived from it."


There is an ambiguity about the phrase "became established," from which this loose statement derives its apparent strength. If by "became established" Mr. Spencer means "continued established," then, as has already been shown, if experience be the test, this cannot

account for the origin of political subordination, but only for its continuance when once established, which latter view no one is likely to dispute.

But if Mr. Spencer means that government was a successful experiment, then it is in the last degree doubtful whether utilitarian considerations such as must be supposed to have been operative, could have acted upon the mind of primitive man with a force sufficient to consciously direct his plans.

The main objection to the social contract theory is that it takes for granted a power of reasoning too subtle for the epoch at which it is placed. This is exactly the fault which vitiates Mr. Spencer's theory, if it is sufficiently definite to be called a theory. All our knowledge of primitive life goes to prove that changes in a social condition are the product of what we may call accident—that is, of some blind force other than the calculation of benefit. Not only for the origination, but also for the continuance, of political subordination, an explanation is required more in accordance with early conditions and the low mental capacity of the governed.

Again, when Mr. Spencer says that the authority of law is derived, he must mean that it is the desire for happiness or security or justice that sets the law in force to secure these ends, and not the power of coercion, which renders the realization of justice possible by the protection which it affords to those who are initiating a form of decision other than that of violence. That the



sense of causation, the logical sequence in Mr. Spencer's mind, is from the desire for happiness to the means for ensuring that happiness, need not be disputed, for such a sequence is natural to all minds in civilized periods of the world's history. But the "natural" order of things is not always the actual order of things. The tendencies of the cultivated human mind are utterly untrustworthy as a proof of the course of events at an early period of evolution. Granting that men have now learnt to utilize the phenomenon of a controlling power for the purposes of law and order, it follows not one whit that when first a controlling force appeared at the head of a social body, it was either placed or maintained there for purposes of securing law and order. It is evident, from what has been already put forward in this work, that in the quarrels of nations at least, "before the names of just and unjust can have place," there must be some controlling power, from the simple fact that otherwise they have no place at all. If the existence of the science of international law is suggested as a proof of the existence of international justice, two facts are tacitly forgotten—the first being that nations decide their quarrels by violence; and the second, that when any real interest has been at stake, international law has been the merest cobweb.

What, then, is seen to be necessary in international matters is not the less necessary in individual matters. In a subsequent chapter further evidence will be adduced to strengthen the conclusion that to direct the controlling

powers for the enforcement of justice, though it may be the normal sequence of the educated human mind, is not the actual sequence of human events. It is generally believed that Mr. Spencer holds the ideas of justice and right to be *à posteriori* to the race, *à priori* to the individual. But a study of moral fact as it appears in rude and barbarous times shows that ideas of justice and right are *à posteriori* to individuals of the low mental development such as may be taken with absolute certainty to have characterized primitive man. It may be seen from a study of early history that it is not originally the idea of justice which authorizes the controlling power, but the controlling power which brings about conditions under which it is possible for the idea of justice to develop. Even without the law of antagonism in reserve it would be sufficient to rest the case on an appeal to the facts of history. If Hobbes had trusted more to his educated ideas of right and wrong and less to his observation, he might have been misled. But, forming a general conclusion from the average action of mankind rather than from self-interrogation, he did not shrink from the conclusion that the average virtue of mankind is the result of a state-adjustment of pains and penalties, and that if that state-adjustment be disturbed, anarchy is the result, and justice has no place. And allowing for influences which from the broad standpoint of Hobbes dwindle into comparative insignificance, and which, considering the state of moral science at that time, might well pass unnoticed, we must conclude that

he was right; that it is Mr. Spencer, and not Hobbes, who is guilty of the inversion.

The primary fact in the relation of organisms is not a question of right and wrong, of happiness or unhappiness, but one of antagonism—"Can I kill thee, or canst thou kill me?" it is only subsequently that reason brings the utilitarian test to bear on conduct, and that the question of right and wrong can be raised. Granting the law of antagonism, which no evolutionist can refuse, it follows that before the very conception of justice can exist, this antagonism must in a measure cease. It can only be long subsequently to the rise of a governing power that the advantages of justice are even perceived, much less studied as the theoretical basis of a form of government. Conceptions of morality are themselves the product of a time when violence has been restrained, and cannot be presupposed as an element in restraining that violence. The truth which, amid all the fictions about natural rights and covenants, animates the Leviathan with its vigour, is a truth which Hobbes arrived at, on a basis of observed fact, by studying the tendencies of his times, and by his knowledge of the teaching of history—that men were naturally, that is, originally, in a state of war. Stripped of its absurd metaphysical accompaniments, and substantiated by a comparison with the laws of the rest of the organic world, this state of nature, this original condition of human beings, becomes, when translated into modern scientific language, the law of the antagonism of organisms. Combined with this fact is

the further truth that a controlling force is the only method by which to advance towards a better state of things. It is at this point, and not before, that the social contract theory becomes absurd.

But it is possible to give scientific reasons now for what certain men saw to be true, but which they were unable correctly to prove. By the operation of the same principle which is an ever-present element in all organic relations, it is possible to explain the origin of that controlling power which we have seen to be the necessary precursor of morality.

The instinct of antagonism, which has accompanied evolution up to this point, and which is the only principle on the operation of which we can count with any certainty, cannot disappear in the passage from individual isolation to family cohesion. It has been shown that at this juncture it becomes, in its fiercest manifestation, intertribal, the antagonism of opposing combinations serving to direct this instinct into a new channel. But individuals are still, except for the purposes of common defence or oppression, antagonistic to one another. In this antagonism it is that political subordination originates, for among individuals in associations there is a continual struggle whereby each strives to exhibit and maintain his superiority over the rest. By the operation of a primitive instinct, which in a lower stage of evolution is seen to aim directly at the life of other organisms, and which among men is the effort to assert that superiority which in early times virtually

means the power of life and death, some one individual places himself at the head of the community, and for purposes of mere self-preservation is bound to enforce among his followers an abstinence from violence which tends to his own discomfort and danger.

The normal course taken by the struggle between organisms is first for existence and then for power, and it is from this universal tendency that government has arisen.

The objection which may be taken to this theory cannot, perhaps, be put more strongly than in the words of Sir Henry Maine ("Early Institutions," lect. xii. p. 336), that "the universal disorders of the race in its infancy may be true of the contests of tribe with tribe and of family with family; but it is not true of the relations of individual man with individual man, whom we, on the contrary, first discern living together under a regimen which, if we are compelled to employ modern phraseology, we must call one of ultra-legality."

It is not, however, required by the present theory that man should have passed, by a literal hand-to-hand individual conflict, from a state of individual antagonism to one of political subordination. When man became man, so to speak, it is natural to suppose that family cohesion was a frequent phenomenon. But, though associated to a certain extent with his fellow-creatures, he has not thereby cut himself wholly adrift from tendencies which the whole course of previous evolution has implanted; they are only temporarily subordinated.

It may, indeed, be frankly admitted, without endangering the present theory, that there is evidence to show that under certain apathetic conditions of human nature there comes a lull in the manifestation of antagonism, a condition which has been characterized in a former chapter as want of vitality. Allowing this at certain periods of the history of certain peoples to have been the case, the very limited field from which Sir Henry Maine draws these observations is insufficient to warrant a conclusion as to the early history of all societies, and to justify the negative conclusions built upon this limited portion in contradiction to the positive teaching of the whole organic world.*

Granting from whatever reasons the temporary subordination of the instinct of antagonism, it remains an instinct with a perpetual liability to reappear, and does reappear in the actual history of some of those peoples who might be cited as instances of "ultra-legality"; while the others, having given birth to no advanced type of civilization and morality, are, from the point of view of moral evolution, worthless. The patriarchal constitution, if proved, would eminently support the present theory, as it would afford an easy and simple example of that form of antagonism which consists

* It will subsequently be shown, in the chapter on Moral Composition, that to turn men into a state of active individual rivalry there is needed some strong motive which each may propose to himself individually. It is obvious, then, that some conditions of life may be too sluggish to suggest any object as worth striving for. But if this is the case, such societies may be summarily set aside as non-progressive.

in the exercise of undisputed authority, which, even if hereditary, will be shown to be a result of the law of antagonism. Considering, however, the immense range of time which is postulated for evolution of all sorts, it is indeed a theory somewhat more than bold which assumes the facts of a certain period of a certain portion of the history of mankind to have been similar throughout huge antecedent periods of evolution ; for unanimity, however apparently great as to the peaceful origin of societies, is rendered untrustworthy by the fact that those societies which have been addicted to violence are precisely those which would leave no trace, legal or otherwise, of their early history, or of that period when they were violent. In the absence, then, of direct evidence as to savage periods of existence, if for no assignable reason such evidence as that of the North American civilizations, with their tendency to fierce internal as well as intertribal antagonism, is to count for nothing as against the "ultra-legality" of the village community, there is no other course but to fall back upon an induction from the facts of the whole organic world, and to say that antagonism is and has been the rule. Nor is it necessary to suppose that where supremacy has been effected, it has necessarily been effected in a gross and palpable way. For though it has been shown that the first form of the antagonism of organisms is physical, yet in the statement of the three laws it was expressly pointed out that between the different forms of antagonisms the transition was

gradual. The requirement of certain intellectual qualifications for ensuring supremacy is obvious, and obviates the necessity of supposing any direct passage from individual physical antagonism to subjection. Not to mention the doubts that have of late been cast on the patriarchal theory of society, the strength of the present theory consists in its adaptability to any progressive form of society. Whether the family or the individual be the initial unit of the social body is equally unimportant, for in either case the tendency to antagonism remains. For if the tendency to individual antagonism can be proved to disappear in the family combination when it first arises, it can be proved to have reappeared in every society which has left its mark on the civilization of the world.

As against the extravagances of a certain form of the social contract theory against which it is directed, Sir Henry Maine's criticism is effective; but it cannot disprove the facts of those periods which, in the history of vigorous nations, have preceded the initiation of a central political control. But it is, perhaps, unnecessary to dwell upon this point at further length; for, as it will subsequently be shown that there is every reason to suppose that the course taken by moral evolution is at certain early periods to subordinate that individual importance to which it afterwards gives such prominence, so here the temporary disappearance of individual rivalry in tribal rivalry may be admitted as unessential to the important features of the case.

The first moral combination is certainly composed of individuals allied by blood ; and if the antagonism between individuals disappears, while that between rival groups appears, it is only in accordance with the theory propounded in a former chapter, that the law of individual antagonism in its fiercer manifestation is converted into the law of tribal antagonism. And to this theory we have merely to add, in accordance with historical fact, that individual antagonism, at certain periods of the history of progressive states, is bound to reappear.

Finally, Sir Henry Maine has himself elsewhere, in his lectures on the primitive forms of legal remedies, proved the existence of a condition of things not very unlike "the contest of individual man against individual man." *

* *Vide* "Early Institutions," lect. x., where Sir Henry Maine admits all that is necessary for the present theory :

"It is a tenable theory that many of the strange peculiarities of ancient law, the technical snares, traps, and pitfalls with which it abounds, really represent and carry on the feints, stratagems, and ambuscades of actual armed strife between man and man, between tribe and tribe" (p. 289).

CHAPTER VIII.

MORALITY AND JUSTICE.

THE relation, then, of morality to force may be said to be twofold. The question at issue between individuals being a question of supremacy, the first method used to decide such questions is invariably found to be the test of physical survival. Therefore force always precedes morality—that is, any form of decision which we should now call moral—in the evolution of conduct.

Secondly, force is necessary to ensure that condition of things under which morality, properly so called, or justice, takes its rise.

It is, therefore, impossible to escape dealing with the idea of justice from this new point of view, that is, as it arises under some species of control. Though no exhaustive analysis of the idea of justice can be expected in the absence of a fuller psychology and a minuter history of human development, yet it is not hard to see that throughout the history of relations involving the notion of justice there still remains the question of supremacy. The position of the antagonistic parties is

the same, it is merely the method of decision that has changed.

This change must be taken in connection with what has been said about the three species of survival. On the supposition that order is imposed through the inauguration of political control, it follows that some other method of decision must take the place of the physical test. But, seeing the universal tendency of the human species to adopt this method of decision instinctively, and their equally instinctive tendency to return to it when other methods have failed, we are led to expect that the substitution of other methods of decision must have been slow and partial, keeping pace with the admiration for forms of physical survival. We might, therefore, expect that under early conditions of existence no authority could be sufficient to repress the constant reappearance of this tendency to reduce all differences to the final terms of existence. Therefore it is that the first perceptible advance to a higher state of morality does not consist in absolutely preventing violence as a method of decision, but in introducing certain limitations into the encounter tending towards equality. The first form which this idea of equality is found to assume does not, as might be supposed, consist in securing what we would call the necessary conditions for a fair fight, but merely in authorizing retaliation and in securing equality in result of inflicted injury—an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. Retaliation may at the present day be observed as one of the first instincts of a rudimentary

sense of justice, and is characteristic of a state of society which lacks an efficient political control. Equality of condition, then, which is already held by many to be an element in justice, by some, indeed, to constitute the whole idea, is the first step towards the introduction of any extraneous idea into the question of physical supremacy; the underlying assumption apparently being that a man shall stand by the results of that physical constitution with which he has come into the world, or shall depart from those conditions no further than his adversary. Thus the first idea of justice is found to temper violence itself, a phenomenon of conduct to which we now consider it to be diametrically opposed, and which it is destined to replace.

There are, however, as has been said, two distinct methods by which this idea of equality is found to characterize decision by violence. The one seeks absolute decision of a question by regulated violence; the other apparently does not contemplate decision, but introduces equality into the infliction and reception of injury under the form of retaliation. The one method, therefore, indicates a resolution to abide by results obtained, and is characteristic of a comparatively advanced stage of political control, when the idea of equality of conditions, such as are held indispensable for a fair fight, has had time for considerable development.

The method of retaliation, on the other hand, marks a low social state of decentralization, when separate classes and families are without that common effective

control necessary either for the repression of violence as a form of decision, or for the introduction of those forms which are held to make it fair, equal, and final.

Nor, again, can the passage from violence pure and simple up to the present forms of justice be effected without intermediate forms other than retaliation and trial by combat, but there is evidence that, side by side with the disposition to settle questions by an appeal to arms, there tends to grow up the legal or non-combatant disposition, which removes the scene of combat from a region of physical to a region of intellectual contest.

It is evident, from what has been said, that even when the notion of right and wrong has arisen, force is not necessarily relinquished as inconsistent with justice ; on the contrary, it is frequently even then considered to give the most full and satisfactory decision. But at this point there is an advance, for the real ground of acquiescence in the result is not the fact that one individual, or set of individuals, is stronger than another, but the belief that a higher power has ordained this method of settling a dispute, and that the success cannot fail to imply the justice of a cause. At least, this is the postulate in all form of trial by combat, instituted by authority, and proves that the notion of justice can be held along with an inconsistent method of procedure. More frequently, when the question of right and wrong is already present, despair of any other method being satisfactory induces the disputants to fall back upon Nature's original method ; the *petitio principii* which we have seen to lurk

in all early moral reasoning again appearing, that whatever is good, and that where the second method of decision is out of the question, the first is yet excellent. For when the intellectual perception of truth and falsehood has begun, the human mind loves to rest upon a fact, and in a question of supremacy successful violence is one of the most readily appreciated of all facts.

But before proceeding further in this investigation, it is to be remarked that in the notion of justice as ordinarily conceived there is a confusion of two ideas which are in reality perfectly distinct, and it is because some writers lay stress on the one idea, some on the other, while some again deal with both together, that the contest still rages as to the exact connotation of the term.

Without pretending to any very great depth of analysis, it seems that there are two meanings loosely given to the term justice—the first being the proper method of deciding a dispute; and the second, that disposition which avoids the kind of conduct which is morally calculated to give rise to dispute. But this latter idea is that which is more properly termed morality. Morality, as here defined, is, from the point of view of the whole world, a certain relation of human beings to one another; from the point of view of the individual, a disposition to fulfil voluntarily all the requirements necessary to ensure such a relation. A perfect state of morality, then, will be a state in which the aims and desires of human beings are so harmonious

as to give rise to no cause for dispute, and therefore, in a perfect state of morality, justice, as properly apprehended, would not be needed.

Justice, therefore, from this point of view, is nothing more than a method of deciding disputes, and must be clearly distinguished from morality, or that state of things which tends finally to lessen the causes of dispute.

Plato's "Republic," the most famous investigation into the notion of justice, itself exhibits the most unmistakable signs of confusion between not only these two, but many other ideas, such as fitness, perfection, and the like. For after wavering among all and any of them in such a manner as to render it extremely difficult for a modern intellect to extract any well-defined and definite meaning except at the expense of the text, Plato finally settles down to a definition of morality, *τὰ ἑαυτοῦ παρρεῖν*, and offers that as a definition of justice. For in this notion of each man's confining himself to his own business there is exactly the notion of non-interference or harmony, which is the root-idea of morality.

Returning, then, to the fact which has already been ascertained, that the original question at issue between individuals or societies is one of antagonism or supremacy, we find the first method of deciding such questions to be violence. But the moral end or aim of existence is to banish violence from the world. Failing to effect this end immediately, mankind seeks to effect it approximately by the institution of an alternative method of deciding quarrels ; and this is the function of justice.

Justice is the gradual approach to morality, for under conditions of perfect morality no place for justice would be found ; or, from another slightly different point of view, justice may be regarded as laying down lines other than those of violence by which a question of supremacy may be decided. The ultimate decision of the human mind has invariably been, that there are no other grounds on which such a question may be settled except those of right and wrong. Therefore the grounds of right and wrong and of violence are seen to be sharply distinguished. Might never is right ; the ideas are for ever irreconcilable. But might precedes right in the history of moral evolution, and the popular paradox owes its force to the frequently observed fact of this precedence. Whenever, too, the conditions necessary to secure justice of decision are absent, a return to the alternative method is inevitable. Might, therefore, is frequently reinstituted in its original position, and thus acquires a certain sanction in the popular mind. We are now, therefore, thrown upon the necessity of determining the nature of these grounds of right and wrong which take the place of violence. From the legal point of view at least they are nothing more than grounds of general utility, or, in other words, those grounds which will best secure social harmony.

From this fact we may extract a second proof that justice and morality are distinct, for while utility is allowed as the end of law, it is generally disallowed as the end of individual conduct. The deep-rooted objec-

tion to receive utility as synonymous with right and wrong is probably due to the conviction that the morality of men can never be thoroughly ensured by anything but a law from within the individual man, predisposing him voluntarily to self-control in all cases where his action is likely to conflict with those of his fellow-creatures, a result which the doctrine of utility would not thoroughly secure. For if antisocial desires are suppressed from fear of their consequences, such desires are admitted to exist. Therefore the weak point of the doctrine of utility consists in the fact that it takes for granted the existence of those antisocial desires which it is the object of education to eradicate, and therefore it falls short of that ideal anticipation without which, as we have seen, the human mind, in framing its educational precepts, will not rest content.

But with law the case is different.

Here it is obvious that, law not being concerned with the inculcation of the highest possible form of conduct, which is the function of morality, but merely with the much more practical end of repressing certain tendencies to lower forms of conduct, as will afterwards be more fully shown, utility is here all-sufficient as the end of the legislator ; and the judge has no other object in the decision of a dispute than to decide the question at issue on the grounds that are best calculated to ensure the general happiness of the world.

Therefore, it is improper to demand that the decisions of justice shall in every case coincide with the require-

ments of an ideal morality, just as it is improper to confuse justice and morality in definition. For all that can with any certainty be secured is the gradual approximation of the decisions of justice to an ideal morality, this being effected, not by the mere mechanism of justice, which is related to morality as cure is to prevention, but by the growth of that state of things in which the necessity for legal administration shall disappear.

From this relation of morality and justice, then, we may conclude that the fundamental notion of right and wrong is respect for the individuality of others. Though gifted with a tendency to unlimited self-assertion, and inclined to trample underfoot all opposing individuality, there grows within the mind of man a conviction that life is a meaningless chaos if such instincts are to rage unrepressed. And though it seems certain, from the unequal force of this conviction in different minds, and from its weakness in early times, that without the phenomenon of a political control such counter-instincts alone would have been unable to carry the day, and though it seems certain, also, that at the present moment they would unaided be unable to hold their own, yet they exist within the individual mind as an eternal measure of the right and wrong of individual action. Not that there is any new or wonderful discovery in the fact that to do anything which tends to the bodily, mental, or moral injury of another is wrong—for, to the credit of human nature, this truth has been long enough felt—but its importance here in connection with the pheno-

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mena of antagonism, of justice, and of morality, necessitate its emphatic restatement. For in the absence of any means whereby this truth, which is the instinct of a few minds, and an intellectual perception of most, shall be made so general as to prevent individual collision, there is at least a means of preventing such inevitable individual collision from issuing in the most flagrant form of wrong—bodily violence. Between that morality which is voluntarily inclined to the good of others at one end of the moral scale, and that absence of morality which tends to the hurt of others at the other end of the moral scale, there is the intermediate phenomenon of justice, which recognizes the inevitable necessity of collision, and seeks to adjudge the rival claims.

Justice is thus found to be a method of deciding disputes alternative with that of violence, and adopted purely and solely for utilitarian reasons as regards both the interests of the individuals themselves and those of the supreme political power, and which thus tends in the direction of morality. The consequent necessary conclusion that the history of law must exhibit a gradual approximation, not only to the present ideas of morality, but also to the present relatively perfect legal systems, is amply borne out by the facts of the history of legal remedies, which exhibit slow growth of the present ideas of justice through the custom of vengeance and retaliation. The full right of personal satisfaction would appear to have been originally fully conceded as between family

and family, while as between the individuals of the same family we may from the earliest times witness the operation of the unwritten law, by virtue of which the proper relation of the parts of a social body is affirmed to be that of harmony.

According to the distinction which has already been drawn, before attempting to trace the rise of justice under some species of control, it is necessary to glance at conditions of society in which the control is so weak as to be practically non-existent. Under these circumstances it will be found that no conditions of equality exist except equality of result, and that, as there is no deciding power, questions of antagonism are never once for all decided, but resolve themselves into an interminable series of injuries and retaliations. The theoretical statement of questions at issue between individuals, as questions of antagonism resulting in some form of decision, is to be taken, like all other theories, as merely indicating an habitual tendency, and therefore liable to be frustrated by circumstance. For the decision of superiority by force, it is necessary that the two contending parties meet. For the decision of a question by some form of justice, there is needed the presence of a third person to reduce the quarrel within the limit of the questions of fact which are held to constitute equality in this form of decision. This third person is the political superior, who, by whatever means, has won and can insist upon his title to recognition.

As has already been stated the first point at which

questions of antagonism are, as a matter of fact, found to take a legal form in the regulation of the right of retaliation and reprisal. The first instinct with which a rising sense of justice and disinclination to violence has to deal is that of revenge. A settled form of decision into which conditions of equality are introduced, even if it be a decision by violence, is characteristic of the control and order introduced by awe of a common power. Without this common power antagonism is more or less unregulated by any pre-conditions of equality, and between different social centres or combinations, antagonism is found to resolve itself into murder, followed by retaliation.

The fierceness with which the members of a family maintain an hereditary blood-feud is necessarily taken in certain states of society as indicative of their loyalty and attachment to one another ; and the history of early societies goes to show that there is no method of diverting the most fatal form taken by the instinct of revenge, except the awe of a superior power. It is impossible to eradicate this instinct, even under conditions of existence the most civilized, and it remains to bear testimony to the force of the instinct of antagonism, of which it is a reactionary form, and, by its occasionally indifferent use of the purest as well as the basest means, it goes to prove that all questions at issue are questions of supremacy which varying means may be adopted to decide. For it may be allowed that, in the case of unmerited and persistent injury, the thirst for vengeance is

relatively righteous; and a man is never so much in love with the principles of justice and truth as when he hopes rightfully to make them the means of crushing an enemy.

The first exception to the custom of retaliation pure and simple is the custom of compounding for murder by a money payment. This practice, though it may at first sight seem of a very questionable morality, is, nevertheless, a distinct advance; for though it may seem to imply a very low estimate of the value of human life to suppose that the matter can be atoned for by the payment of a certain sum, yet in the state of society under discussion the value of life is so low that practically it can hardly be made lower. Consequently, the custom of compensation must be regarded as a distinct advance in the direction of legality, and as indicating, in the willingness to forego blood-revenge, a tendency towards amelioration of disposition. For it is the mistake of judging barbarous times by a civilized condition of thought to suppose that in such times there is sufficient respect for human life to be shocked by the custom of compensation.

Another method of advance from the custom of simple retaliation consists, as Sir Henry Maine has shown, in the introduction of certain legal forms, of which the general tendency seems to be to take the right of securing satisfaction out of the hands of the individual, and to place it with a delegated authority. For it is characteristic of the instinct of revenge, which animates the custom of retaliation, that it shuns a

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definite settlement. If social life is ever to assume a civilized form, and if antagonisms must arise, there is need of some form of settlement which shall end each separate question once for all, and forbid its renewal under penalty of law.

But this desired end of final settlement cannot be reached all at once, and is, on the contrary, indicative of an advanced state of civilization. Before we arrive at this period, there is a long history of semi-legalized forms of restraint which marks the process whereby the right to personal satisfaction is gradually given up, and the power to redress injuries becomes vested in the supreme authority; while, again, long after a legal form of decision is practised by one portion of the community, the primitive method remains in vogue with another portion, showing the extreme difficulty with which the change is effected, and the tenacity of forms of physical antagonism.

But before it is possible to leave the investigation of this change in the method of deciding disputes, something more must be said as to the meaning of the term justice, and as to the three possible relations of men to one another—physical, intellectual, and moral. We have by no means exhausted the contents of the idea of justice when we have dealt with the idea of equality. There is, besides, a notion which it undoubtedly contains, and that is the intellectual judgment between truth and falsehood. Though this idea is, apparently, far enough from the idea of deciding a question by force, yet when

we remember that the first phenomenon which is calculated to strike the mind in antagonism is that of a fact, namely, successful violence, we are already one step on the way towards accounting for the introduction of this judgment. The judgment of truth and falsehood is an operation of which the lowest form of intellect is in some degree capable, so that we have not to account for the psychological origin of this operation, but only for its introduction into questions of dispute. Remembering, then, that justice is a form of decision alternative with violence, and that it first takes its rise by the introduction of conditions of equality and legality into forms of violence, it is then evident that the judgment of truth and falsehood will first be exercised as to the questions of fact which are held to constitute the equality of conditions.

Were there no other questions to be decided except those relating to physical ability, the persistent use of force would not be relinquished even as slowly as it is. But it will be observed that, as civilization proceeds, the ground of dispute is found to contain questions which relate to man under his intellectual and moral aspect. The idea that a question of facts unconnected with physical abilities can be properly decided by an appeal to force becomes to the advancing intelligence more and more ridiculous, and the disposition more and more marked to refuse, under these circumstances, the verdict of violence pure and simple. The next question, then, will necessarily be, What are these questions of fact—on

what ground and for what reasons are they held sufficient to prove that one man is in the right and another in the wrong? It will be found that the intellectual form of decision, after first showing signs of uncertainty of purpose and want of a proper test or standard of judgment,* is finally based on those moral—that is, utilitarian—grounds which form the basis of all legal systems.

Yet this introduction of a question of fact extraneous to the question of supremacy cannot take place until a considerable advance has been made. The questions of fact upon which disputes are first found to turn are questions of property, and the idea of property implies that both intellectual and moral grounds are introduced into the question which violence is frequently still held to solve. Let us assume that the original title to property was strength, and that an object belonged to a man no longer than he could keep it. Then in the disposition to recognize some other claim than that of strength, and to insist upon that claim as overruling the fact of superior strength, we can observe a moral ground constituting a right to possession, and an intellectual ground dealing with the question as to whether the facts of the case are such as to fall within the definition of such a right to possession. Yet it is extremely improbable that, in the absence of a political control, the form of decision would take place on intellectual and moral grounds merely because such had been


* Sir Henry Maine, "Primitive Forms of Legal Remedies."

introduced. Yet the tendency to do so exists, and is used as a convenient point of departure by the enactments of the superior power. Granting that this point of departure depends for its fundamental value on the growing respect for the individuality of others, it is the phenomenon of property which marks the beginning and growth of this respect. Accordingly, it is this idea of possession introduced into questions of antagonism pure and simple that must now be examined.

If the intellectual judgment between truth and falsehood is of such antiquity as to obviate the present necessity of accounting for its origin, the idea of possession is still more so, for it evidently exists with regard to prey in a part of the animal kingdom where intellectual judgments are in the highest degree rudimentary or non-existent. It is plain, too, from all parts of the animal kingdom, that the first title to possession is strength; but it is equally plain that the tendency of moral progress is to substitute, as has been said, other titles to possession.

The first title to possession other than strength which seems readily and habitually to occur to the human mind under all conditions, is priority of possession. We may verify for ourselves the fact that priority of possession is one of the precursors to a moral judgment in a question of disputed property. But if the moralist may be absolved from the necessity of inquiring into the origin of the idea of possession, he cannot be absolved from the necessity of inquiring why priority

of possession should constitute one of its titles. For this, it would seem, three reasons can be given—the absolute necessity of some other title than that of strength, which is forbidden by the political control; the utilitarian reason, that this method is calculated to secure a certain amount of undisturbed relations if properly carried out; and, finally, the psychological reason, on the lines of which both the former reasons proceed, namely, that if possession is nine-tenths of a right, priority of possession is nineteen-twentieths, for the simple reason that the man who is in first possession of a place or an article has evidently shown superior address in getting it, and also, through the advantage of time and place, would be likely to show the best physical title to its retention. For the test of priority will be found to apply to the true cardinal physical virtues, strength, dexterity, and speed. Either strength, dexterity, or speed would enable their possessors to distance competitors, and to arrive first by overcoming or evading obstacles at a given point. When once, then, this point or object is gained, there is an advantage of both time and place for repelling attack; and thus priority would come gradually to be credited with its known consequences under certain conditions. By this last form of explanation the advantage is gained of a comparatively easy transition from physical to other titles of possession, the new idea of priority of possession being thus psychologically affiliated to the old title of mere violence.



As to the utilitarian element, it is easy to see that no society could long remain without the perception that, with regard to the necessity of internal peace, individual strength is the worst of all possible titles.

The reasons, then, for the growth of the idea of the sacredness of property may be shortly said to be utilitarian and political, the necessity of setting a limit to violence, both from the point of view of the society and the point of view of the ruler, being evident.

But it is apparently some considerable time before we meet with a disposition to regard property as anything else than a concomitant of antagonism, either physical or intellectual. Regard for the individuality or rights of others is a conception belonging to a time when forms of moral survival are dimly seen to constitute an element in the form of legal decision. Before this period is reached, either physical or intellectual antagonism is the prominent factor. The first title to a favourable decision in a law-suit is apparently not so much the justice of a claim, but the power of complying with minute formulæ of law. Sir Henry Maine insists strongly on the curious feature of minute legal technicalities which beset early legal forms, any failure to comply with which is held to invalidate a claim, and he hazards the conjecture, which has already been quoted in another part of this work, that such snares are the result of a change from physical to intellectual contest—a conclusion which, it is needless to say, the theory of antagonism fully bears out.

The irrelevance, according to modern ideas, of such a title to victory is not, however, so great as it may seem. To any one who has observed in the young a similar tendency to irrelevant exaction of minute verbal accuracy, with whom, in a dispute, a change of formula or the merely casual misplacement of a word is held in some peculiar way to constitute defeat as to a question of fact; to any one, also, who is aware in how many particulars the mental condition of the young recalls the ascertained early mental condition of nations;—it will not seem absurd to suppose that this tendency to irrelevance is the normal and original condition of minds when first obscurely grappling with the mental relations of facts, and endeavouring to handle intellectual weapons that are new to them. For before the three spheres of antagonism have been separated, it is observable that victory in the one is frequently held to constitute a similar title to supremacy in the other.

In the decision of a question of right and wrong by regulated violence, this confusion is very apparent, though obscured by the later belief in an appeal to a supreme being; while again, with the young, the irrelevant tests which they frequently suggest as to a pure question of fact, such as the decision as to the correctness of either of two contradictory statements by a test of physical excellence, plainly show that under certain mental conditions, the question being merely one of supremacy, all tests are for that purpose equally relevant.

When again we reach the point at which moral

considerations arise, the question of antagonism and supremacy, though it ought strictly to be banished, yet lingers by an evolutionary law in the frame of mind which regards judicial functions as ministering to a personal triumph or defeat rather than as what they ideally are, a means of measuring the right and wrong of actions. For the question is not so much between two individuals as between two abstract possibilities of action, one of which will involve the good, the other the evil, of the community. Though one of such individuals necessarily triumphs, yet the interest which he has at stake is, relatively to the interest which the community has at stake, almost as nothing. In proportion to the identification of the individual with the community does legal warfare cease to become legal warfare, and take the form of a deeper public interest. When the region of moral survival is reached, the only title to triumph which a man can claim is, that he has acted on those principles which are best calculated to ensure the welfare of the whole community; and according as the community values its internal peace is it bound to ensure by law, as will afterwards be shown, the protection of that man who is otherwise likely to suffer for having acted in such a manner as to place the public good before his private interest, and the condemnation, on the other hand, of such as recognize no law but individual self-assertion. Until this definite ground for decision is reached, there is nothing to prevent individual collision of any sort being terminated by violence or treachery.

For though it has been held that the germ idea of justice appears first in equality of result, and then in equality of preconditions to encounter, yet at the point where morality and justice tend to meet, justice becomes more and more informed with the spirit of morality, and less and less inclined to countenance any form of decision which does not imply a tacit veto on the necessity of any form of decision. Such a change of ground, however, cannot be effected without a struggle, and in that struggle justice is supported by its ally law.

Under the protection of law there is room for the growth of that spirit of mutual confidence which, as history seems to show, has never been wholly absent or wholly present, but which one man has always been ready to repose and another to abuse. It is at this point that questions into which justice enters, questions of individual collision, cease to have an entirely individual bearing. It is not until the political control is reinforced by perceptions of general utility that a definite standard of the value of actions can be made out. That principle, which formerly tended to introduce equality into physical and intellectual collision, now insists on the supposition of the equal opportunity of all men to do right as the proper basis from which legal enactment must start. But before this period, when not only is the conception of rights and obligations practically non-existent, but when the political control is ignorant of any rule of action except that of self-interest, legal enactment and grounds of judicial decision are found to be characterized

exactly by that irrelevance which might be expected to mark the transition from the definite and easily intelligible test of individual capacity to that of public welfare.

To sum up the conclusions to which the previous considerations point.

Justice is only intelligible if antagonism be presupposed. It must be distinguished from morality, which is simply regard for the individuality of others, and it may then be provisionally defined as the adjustment of rival claims.

But besides the difficulty which has beset the term in consequence of its confusion with morality, there has been added the further difficulty that the method of adjusting rival claims has ranged from simple retaliation up to legal decisions involving the highest principles of morality.

A distinction must, therefore, be introduced between actual and ideal justice. Actual justice is the victory awarded to one individual over another on grounds of general utility. Ideal justice is opposed to antagonism, and seeks, also on grounds of general utility, to readjust the equilibrium that has been disturbed by antagonism.

But these grounds of general utility are grounds of equality; therefore ideal justice may be defined as equality.

CHAPTER IX.

HERO-WORSHIP AS AN ELEMENT IN MORALITY.

PERHAPS it may be objected that, on the theory that political subordination is the result of an ever-active struggle for power, and that such power is the prize of successful antagonism, the sovereignty would tend to pass more rapidly from one hand to another than would be consistent with the requirements of law, order, or historical fact. In the absence of a principle correlative with the struggle for power, this might perhaps be so. But when in all ages we find the admiration of strength and the reverence for manifestation of power throwing a spell upon the lesser spirits, it is easily intelligible how, in the rudest times, a willing obedience is won from those who might else singly or in union hurl that power from its seat. In this way constituted authority is hedged about with a divinity that defies assault, and by virtue of a purely psychological influence is able to avail itself of the loyalty of the whole of the rest of the community. The united power of all the individuals composing the community is thus, in a manner, centred in their leader,

to be used with fatal effect on recusants against the majesty of the sovereign.

Thus out of simple antagonism are the elements of order formed. Partly diverted by moral combination, there is left sufficient antagonism to initiate political subordination, which first becomes assured by virtue of the admiration of power, and finally by utilitarian considerations. In a patriarchal community this process is greatly facilitated by the division into families with a headship, which, though won by no actual struggle, rests on a principle of authority based on the fact that the male parent throughout has possessed the power of life and death over the members of his family. If in a single family the purely antagonistic principle is to a certain extent absent, yet as the individuals increase and the family enlarges into a clan, the sphere of ambition enlarges too, and the struggle for supreme power becomes more and more unhampered ; while between rival families of the same society it exists with unmitigated sway, tending to the eventual headship of some one family over the rest of the community.

Whatever may be urged by categorical moralists against the propriety of that universal esteem which is bestowed by the world upon power and greatness rather than upon the more essential moral qualities, this so-called misdirection of homage is but an instinct persisting beyond the time of its moral usefulness at a time when the verdict of mankind has, on abstract moral grounds, been pronounced against it. Speculation on

morality only arising in a high stage of civilization, there is great danger of losing sight of the obvious fact that in early communities what is now connoted in the idea of morality was then almost wholly absent. The significance which moral facts possess for the cultivated mind is to the uncultivated absolutely non-existent. With nothing better to worship, and when incapable of recognizing a better object, man worships his conqueror. That homage which, when now offered to those forms of greatness which exist at the expense of others, is denounced as misdirected, is at one period of evolution a distinct advance in the direction of social harmony. The admiration of power is one of the first psychological principles in the order of evolution calculated to raise in the individual an enthusiastic regard for others. That self-devotion of the individual in the antagonism of combination against combination, which has been pointed out as the first great lesson in altruism, before it can be regarded as containing an element of devotion to the community, is more frequently found to contain an element of devotion to some one individual, who, by virtue of his supreme power, has gathered in himself as it were the corporate existence of the community. Loyalty from this point is capable of becoming so absorbing a sentiment that the danger would in many cases seem to be, not the dissolution of the community through the recurrence of the most violent forms of egoism so much as the arrest of individual development through a too unhesitating surrender of personal rights.

In the slavish submission of Eastern communities to their worthless potentates, we seem to recognize the perversion of an otherwise noble principle, and to find in it one of possibly many causes which have contributed to the mental petrification of non-progressive communities. But in all loyalty which is self-devotion we recognize a moral beauty. Be it the Persian who leaps into the sea to lighten the ship that carries his dastardly monarch, or the English royalist more than reconciled to death by a word or a smile from the worthless and tyrannical Charles, one and all such instances illustrate not only the influence of power and greatness over the lesser individuality, but the nobility of that instinct which prompts man at all hazards, and in defiance of facts, to find an object for reverential admiration. This grand contradiction of the selfish part of nature, appearing in the rudest times, unconsciously strikes the keynote of all subsequent homage. It is the recognition of this principle as a living element in morality which has continued to animate the opposition to the Utilitarian theory, and which has, in a measure, eventually conquered it by arguments drawn from the emotion rather than the reason.

It is a bar to the strictly consistent statement of any happiness theory of morality that the phenomenon of self-surrender and self-sacrifice remains as an irreducible altruistic instinct. From a study of the course of evolution, it would seem that though self-sacrifice appears early as an individual phenomenon necessitated by the

antagonism of societies, this phenomenon is not so much to be valued for the suggestion of a high moral standard which it contains, as merely for the aid it gives to the process of political subordination. Similarly, it has been observed by different moralists that the tribute paid to various forms of greatness is paid in most cases independently of any selfish motive. Adam Smith, who, whatever be the value of his moral system, is unrivalled as an observer of human nature, speaks of the proneness of men "to regard with reverence, and even sometimes with a sort of respectful affection, that fortunate violence which we are no longer capable of resisting. . . . To all such mighty conquerors the great mob of mankind are naturally disposed to look up with a wondering though, no doubt, a very weak and foolish admiration. By this admiration, however, they are taught to acquiesce with less reluctance under that government, which an irresistible force imposes on them, and from which no reluctance could deliver them." It is because the moral instinct is comparatively untrained among by far the greater number of men, not only at a comparatively early stage of social growth, but in nearly every age and time, that individual sympathies are better calculated to keep pace with successful aggression than to work on the side of an ideal justice. Most men in their secret hearts desire power and influence, and find even in the tyrannical power of another something that they admire and forgive, from a secret consciousness that they have at all times desired a similar

position, and, had they won it, might not have been found less exacting.


The state of society we are supposing is not sufficiently advanced to aspire after other forms of justice than the rough and ready subordination of antagonistic claims to the will of a superior power. In all early societies, as in the less developed portions of the societies of the present day, the consideration to which the most regard is paid is not a question of justice, but one of strength. But, not to repeat the insistence of previous chapters, it is the influence of the individual who triumphs in this form of survival over his former adversaries which here concerns us most. By virtue of the spell cast upon the imagination, he acquires the right to dispose of the persons of the rest of the community. It is in this ready acquiescence in the duty of personal devotion to the reigning power that we seem to get, politically speaking, the first token of a regard for others sufficient to set personal claims altogether on one side. Surprising as is the strength of this instinct throughout all history, it may be doubted whether it would be sufficient to explain the phenomenon of subordination in early societies, were it not that the instinct appears strongest when physical prowess is the subject of admiration, and consequently can with confidence be reckoned upon as a factor of even more importance at a period when the hand-to-hand collision of societies was more frequent than it is at the present day. Mr. Buckle, whose history of civilization has inspired many a young reader with an inval-

able intellectual impulse, is, by the necessity of his generous mind, out of sympathy with this view. Yet, even though we may be possessed with a burning sense of the injustice that, under various shallow pretexts, has been perpetuated by man upon man, it is possible, if we have grasped the ordinary barbarity of nature's methods, to find good even in the tyrannical administration of a single individual. For we must contrast such administration, not with an ideal better, but with an actual worse. Such phenomena as are at present under discussion should be compared with the chaos of bloodshed which has ushered in every single civilization, rather than severely criticized by the highest standard of an advanced age. If it can be shown that the principle of liberty which Mr. Buckle advocates with such an intense earnestness is the evolutionary outcome of an opposite state of things, then even a form of society which seems, and indeed is, fraught with little else than cruelty and injustice will have its relative value. In criticizing such actions as those of the Scottish clans, it is to be remembered that if men who recognize no law except obedience to a barbarous chieftain, and are ready to plunder and murder at his will, are yet beyond all doubt filled with a chivalrous devotion to their captain and to one another, in the evolution of morality this devotion has its relative value. Honour among thieves is the popular expression of the evolutionary truth that combination even for the purpose of depredation necessarily begets a higher form of morality by necessitating mutual trust and depen-

dence. In viewing the morality of an action from an evolutionary point of view, we must be careful to judge from within that moral compass which bounds the actors. Little as actions are judged now from the standpoint of the whole world, still less can they rightly be so judged at a period of history when sympathies were still more narrow and passions still more intense. To do otherwise would be to lessen an already limited field of right action, and to regard the proceedings of any large body of men from the point of view of their enemies alone. The further we go back in the world's history the truer it is that right to a man's own circle involves wrong to the rest of the world. Similarly, the further we go back the less do we find the principle of individual liberty calculated to produce anything but the most chaotic results in government.

It is this principle of reverence for a supreme power and voluntary self-surrender to its dictates which, under the form of hereditary right, has throughout history secured the comparative stability of thrones. For hereditary right, though on a casual glance apparently having little in common with the awe inspired by a supreme power, will yet, on a closer investigation, be found to take the form of a compound notion, made up of the deep respect for royalty on the one hand, and certain notions of property on the other.

There are only two facts in all history which prevent the theory that political supremacy necessarily falls to the strongest from possessing all the truth of a self-



evident proposition. These facts are hereditary right and the will of the people. Though at first sight there would appear to be a contradiction between the fact of the belief in the hereditary right of kings and the theory that the throne is the reward of successful antagonism, yet when taken in conjunction with the tendency of the human mind to worship greatness which has already been pointed out, and with the phenomenon of property which has been dealt with in a previous chapter, these apparent exceptions are calculated to substantiate rather than weaken the theory that it is power alone which originally wins and retains a crown.

There are, then, three principles which are found in history as constituting a title to political supremacy—strength, comprehending by strength whatever considerations tend to place the people at the mercy of a single power ; secondly, hereditary right ; and, thirdly, the will of the people. Now, it does not require much penetration in the study of history to see, as will be more fully stated in the following chapter, that the nearer we approach the origin of any given nation,* the more insignificant is the part played by the will of the people in controlling the supreme power, and the smaller the influence they wield in the management of their own affairs. And therefore, in an inquiry into the

* If this statement seem not to be absolutely true of the earliest beginnings of some peoples, it is confirmed at that later period of their history which must more properly be regarded as the origin of a nation—the period, namely, when the rivalry of neighbouring communities has had its normal effect.

causes of the comparative stability of early monarchies, the popular will may be almost wholly disregarded from a constitutional point of view, and is only of value when swayed by the designing influence of some pretender to the throne. We are left, then, to deal with the principles of strength and hereditary right.

Now, however prominent a part hereditary right may play in the after-history of a nation, it cannot account for the origin of government. Further, as strength is necessary for the initiation, so also is it necessary in early times for the continuance of a political control, especially in the absence of hereditary right. For if history shows that for the most part both these principles are necessary for the maintenance of a throne, yet it is strength which is by far the more important element; for strength is found to hold its own where hereditary right cannot, while hereditary right without strength totters rapidly to its fall. To take one instance from among a thousand, both the one and the other position is illustrated in the history of early English monarchy. When the governing power of the legitimate line begins to fail, Richard II. is deposed by Henry IV. Hereditary right is set aside, and the throne falls to the man whose position gives him the greatest strength. Though both hereditary claims and the necessity of reform were urged by Henry IV., that is, though both the second and the third titles to sovereignty were urged, it is evident that it was strength alone which decided in his favour.

From this point an uncertainty as to the stability of

the throne is introduced into English history which we do not meet with before. The reigning house has from this point merely its strength to depend upon, and when that begins to fail its doom is already at hand, for the heirs of the legitimate line immediately begin to aim at regaining their birthright. As soon as a favourable opportunity is offered, the Wars of the Roses begin, and this great struggle is in reality nothing more than an exemplification of the truth that, in the absence of the two other titles, of which the one, hereditary right, has been set aside, and the other, the will of the people, is practically not existent, supreme political power is the prize of successful antagonism. For though other considerations enter, and other elements are at work, such as the bitter jealousies of the feudal barons, the rivalry between the North and the South, and the desire of a certain portion of the community for political reform,* yet these elements are merely subsidiary, and do not originate the contest, which, on the other hand, is to those various parties merely an opportunity for prosecuting their political ends, or for wreaking their vengeance upon one another.

If, then, hereditary right is found to share with strength the original title to sovereignty, it becomes necessary to examine more closely the psychological composition of this idea of hereditary right, with a view to ascertaining whether it contains any elements inconsistent with the theory of antagonism.

* Bright's "Mediæval Monarchy."

In the first place, hereditary right as a title to sovereignty is not positively contradictory of strength; for the strength necessary for gaining sovereignty has been shown to consist largely of personal influence over the minds of the multitude, and no individual is better calculated to wield an influence next in importance to that of the monarch than he who has all his life been surrounded by the dignity of the reigning house. Further, it is plain, both from the study of history and from the protests of moralists, with what facility men have at all times fallen down to worship spurious forms of greatness. Among these, the influence of which cannot be attributed either wholly or chiefly to individual merit, nothing has ever equalled, in universal intensity and steady permanence down to the last syllable of the recorded history of any nation, the strange fascination exercised by royalty of descent.

Whatever be the explanation of this phenomenon, and it seems to be merely the result of a possible method of regarding men, not as individuals, but as links in a chain of descent which is imposing or otherwise to the imagination, the fact at least is certain. From this consideration it will be seen that the ideal influence, as well as the practical knowledge and material weapons of statecraft, are thus in the hands of the heir-apparent, and therefore, without arguing in a circle, heredity may be defined as a species of strength.

In the second place, it has been seen that the phenomenon of possession is the first extraneous fact

which enters into the antagonistic relation of men to one another. Such being the case, it is further evident, from the study of primitive history, that the voluntary self-subordination of early societies to the irresponsible power of their chief constitutes them a sort of property which can be bequeathed equally with the other personal property of the chief. Therefore, to question the right of a king to bequeath his power would be to question the right of any man to bequeath the property he had acquired, and would be generally resented as a principle tending to throw society into confusion. As we have seen, to leave a man in possession of the results even of his successful antagonism is the first step towards the limitation of that antagonism, and must necessarily commend itself to the least subtle intelligence. And when there is added to this consideration, which might in itself be insufficient to prevent the throne from becoming the incessant aim of adventurers, the further consideration, which would inevitably be present to any community not destitute of the most elementary instincts of government or order, that to allow the supreme power to be the legitimate object of any man's ambition would be to introduce into the community an element calculated to produce the most fatal divisions and dissensions, the influence which such reflections would even unconsciously exercise upon the already existing tendency to make monarchy hereditary becomes at once apparent. For it is a greater assumption to suppose the absence of such reflections in even the most barbarous society than

to suppose their presence, and what is afterwards popular will exists first in the rudimentary form of a popular acquiescence which ratifies existing arrangements when they are presumably better than a possible worse, and thus, by preventing a continuous struggle, at least disarms of its more fatal characteristics that phenomenon which it is powerless to prevent.

Perhaps the connection of the idea of hereditary right with strength will appear clearer by comparison with the allied doctrine of divine right, which is simply a more flagrant and uncompromising statement of hereditary right from the mouths of ecclesiastics rather than lawyers. It will then be seen that hereditary or divine right is connected with the spell cast by the manifestations of power on the one hand, and with the right of property and bequest on the other. The doctrine of divine right is the last desperate struggle of the original title to sovereignty, strength, to make good its position by the aid of hereditary right, and in defiance of the will of the people.

The first step taken by the human mind, when it finds itself in the presence of a great social fact of which it dimly and prophetically sees the injustice, is to invest that fact with the authority of a divine origin. This truth has been referred to before, and will be referred to again. Just as war, at a certain stage of the development of the human mind, is invested with a divine sanction, apparently by sheer revulsion from the iniquity of such a phenomenon, so the phenomenon of a single

individual claiming and exercising the power of life and death over a whole community, finds an attempted explanation in the theory of the divine right of kings. That such a theory is propounded proves the necessity for an explanation of the phenomenon in accordance with the developing perceptions of the community. Accordingly, the theory of divine right was framed in English history at a time when absolute monarchy was not a forward, but a backward, step in the constitutional history of the people. But it would not have found the acceptance it did find had it not struck a responsive chord in many hearts. And though the theory of divine right, when it appears, is stated in the absolute and uncompromising form in which we find it from the felt necessity of urging some strong counter-argument to that form of reasoning which issues in social contract theories, and which asserts the only logical and defensible reason for political control to be the wishes of the people, yet that such a theory should have found not less than half a nation to support it proves the existence of an evolutionary reason for this relation of the one to the many. For if the theory of divine right does not appear until comparatively late in history, it is because the quiet acquiescence of the people obviates the necessity in earlier times of any such assertion of supreme authority, and not because the supreme authority is too weak to issue such a declaration. It is only when the criticizing spirit has arisen that the necessity is seen of basing existing arrangements on logical ground. Before such

a time the power of kings passes unquestioned by any except rival claimants, from the simple fact that the mental condition of the times does not admit of the possibility of criticism on constitutional grounds.

We may conclude, then, from an examination of history that the theory which ascribes the origin of government to successful antagonism is not contradicted by the fact of hereditary monarchy. On the contrary, the principle of heredity is of material assistance. For it is easily explicable by reference to two psychological principles, admiration of power on the one hand, and the idea by which human beings are regarded as a sort of property on the other, and when thus explained confirms rather than weakens the original theory.

CHAPTER X.

MORALITY AND LAW.

MORALITY and law coincide in this, that both are concerned with securing certain equitable relations—with this difference, that whereas law never for a moment relinquishes the position that such equitable relations are but a means to the end, happiness, morality, as occasionally defined, regards those equitable relations, from the point of view of the individual and under the name of virtue, as an end in itself. But it is further seen that morality is a more comprehensive term, or operates in more comprehensive relations, than law. All that is prescribed by law is prescribed also by morality ; morality covers all the ground which law covers, and more besides ; morality, as an ideal state, can be conceived of as existing without law, but law must ever be conceived of as in conjunction with morality. If, then, morality is to be considered as active throughout and beyond the sphere of law, what is the necessity of supplementing morality by legal enactments? What is the difference between the spheres of ethics and politics, and where the necessity of their

conjunction to secure harmony of relations among the members of a state? The first answer to this question is that law is the morality of lower natures. If by morality we understand obedience to some internal impulse imposing a restraint on the indulgence of anti-social inclinations, and by law the obedience to some external authority imposing similar restraints, the similarity and the difference are at once apparent. What morality causes the individual voluntarily to impose upon himself, law by means of penalties imposes from outside. Thus law is an artificial device for exacting a conformity to moral rules, which certain individuals may refuse to accord. The first duty of a state is the preservation of those who are inaugurating a higher morality from those who are still under the influence of violent instincts. It has been shown how that, in the three stages of survival, the final triumph of moral survival would be hopeless but for the force of the social sanction which favours various forms of self-abnegation, and here it may be added that law is the positive embodiment of the spirit of this social sanction. When a community is advancing in civilization, and the development of industry and commerce has taught the necessity of mutual aid, there is yet always a large residuum of low moral characteristics in a certain portion of the community. From the evolutionary point of view, the criminal classes of an advancing community must be regarded as merely reproducing out of season instincts and tendencies which belong to a primitive age,

and which in their place would certainly have contributed as much to the advantage of their possessors as they now contribute to their detriment. It has been said that the balance of evil in a community is brought about by the effort of individuals to possess themselves of a gain with less than the amount of labour requisite for its honest acquirement. From the evolutionary point of view, then, the evil results from the fact that certain individuals are not yet broken in sufficiently to bear the burden of civilized modes of existence. Law, then, in an advanced and advancing state, is an artificial device for securing a uniform rate of moral progress, a conformity to changed and changing conditions; a device, in fact, for imposing upon lower natures the self-restraint of the higher, for protecting those that are in the vanguard of moral evolution from those that lag behind.

Again, in so far as no nature is *teres atque rotundus*, in so far as primitive instincts exist in a greater or less degree in every individual, repressed, perhaps, by considerations born of the circumstances in which the individual finds himself placed, but ever ready to appear under certain conditions, law may be regarded as the protection of the individual against himself. Moral considerations address themselves to the higher, law to the lower, part of a man's nature. Law is concerned with a morality lower than the average; a moral code, on the contrary, must provide for the highest moral agent in the community, and his highest ideal aspirations. Motives range from a self-destructive selfishness to a

self-destructive altruism, and a perfect moral system must supply motives capable of actuating Plato's just man, who will act right in secret and to his own detriment. Thus the sphere of morality is capable of indefinite extension, while the sphere of law is limited to the securing of equitable conditions of existence. Law, being a function of the social organism, as morality is of the individual, must be adapted to the requirements of all parts of the social organism, and to this end strikes a medium of moral enactment so general as to suit all. Law-enforced penalties are necessary to repress the instincts of that portion of the community in whom the intuitive force of morality is undeveloped, while morality, possessing its own internal sanctions and undefined aspirations, appeals to the noblest element in a state. From this it follows that in a really progressive community morality and law would proceed in an inverse ratio, the necessity for law diminishing as the internal power of morality increased.

Again, on the other hand, retracing the steps of civilization, it cannot be doubted that self-restraint and internal moral sanctions decrease in proportion as we approach barbarism, and similarly the possible, if not the actual, sphere of law increases in relative proportion, until abstinence from violence, and the motives leading to such abstinence, are identified with the fear of some external controlling power. In the words of Hobbes, individuals can conceive no other motive for the repression of an antisocial instinct than "the terror of some

punishment greater than the benefit they expect" from its indulgence.


It is from the confusion of these two separate provinces of morality and law that has arisen the view of a certain old school of moralists, and notably of the thinker just quoted, that all morality originates in the command of a political superior. To many this will always seem the wildest extravagance of royalism. But when it is remembered that a strong governing power has at all times been necessary to repress violence, and that in no known period of history has the government of any country fallen into confusion without a simultaneous subversion of moral order, and that clearly as effect and not as cause, then it becomes very clear on what irrefragable justification the contentions of this school were based, and that, as a matter of fact, justice and morality are of no account in the absence of political control. But though the actual outcome of justice and morality is nothing in the absence of political control, this is not because justice and morality draw their sole inspiration from adherence to a dynasty, or from fear of a political superior. Their mutual dependence is not so intimate that when the fear of law is removed virtue is straightway extinguished too. Virtue may still exist, but cannot obtain a hearing, because force is now arrayed against it instead of on its side. Justice and morality may yet possess an interior source at certain periods of evolution, independent of an enforcing power, though, in the heterogeneous composition of a state, that

controlling power is necessary to secure the results of virtue from its antagonist, vice. Force is necessary for the successful demonstration, but not for the origination, of morality ; it secures other moral agents free play, but, except in the reverence for itself which it begets, which is the greater as we approach barbarism, it has no direct influence upon morality. Physical survival will carry the day unless the growth of the opposite social qualities be carefully protected by force ; but these social qualities are not literally dependent on the existence of that force. However their origin be associated with force, as is that of all moral phenomena, there is developed, in the course of evolution, an internal sentiment which, where it exists, feels itself independent and its own law. Had this school of moralists allowed the moral notions of individuals here and there to be capable of possessing a binding force irrespective of any conscious notions either of compulsion or utility, it would not have met with the odium and derision it has incurred. But these reasoners, by fixing their attention too exclusively on the inevitable action of the lower members of the community in the absence of restraint, and by assigning too great an importance to crude utilitarian sanctions appealing to a low average of moral capacity, blinded themselves to the existence in certain cases of morality sufficiently strong to withstand the withdrawal of compulsion, and which truly and honestly felt itself to have attained an elevation above the ordinary considerations of profit and loss. Hence the quiet strength of intuitional

moralists in the face of objectors who have rightly denied the universality of the moral sense, and the possibility of making it, even in private life, the sole basis of moral action.

It has already been contended that the origin of political control cannot have been utilitarian, and reasons have been adduced for believing that it has arisen, wherever it has arisen, in a manner more natural, that is, more in accordance with the tendencies of the time. That enforcement of restraint, whether between individuals or combinations, which first arises as a result of the struggle for superiority, is gradually seen to have advantages which commend themselves more and more as the community advances in clearness of conception as to the rational end of existence. The verdict of history fully bears out the presumption that government originated on its own account, and not on account of the people. The political and social history of every nation that has contributed to the progress of the human mind illustrates the advance from the one of these conceptions to the other. The question which confronts every state as it emerges from its original comparative barbarism, and which sums up in a great measure its whole political history, is the question as to whether the people exists for the sake of its rulers, or the rulers for the sake of the people. According as a people answers this question for itself is its history written. The order which Nature ordains man subverts, and replaces an irresponsible tyranny by an accountable

and humanizing government. The peaceful progress of a state depends upon the possibility of a gradual compromise between these antagonistic points of view. The normal course of all progressive states has been, instead of an arbitrary power evoked and sustained by the blind forces of evolution, to substitute a responsible power evoked and sustained by the forces of evolution made intelligent, and when such a movement has once been set on foot, it cannot be arrested except at the price of revolution. It is well, too, if the rights of the reigning power be not too accurately defined or clearly grasped; if, indeed, the people have not succeeded early in their history in making the tenure of power conditional on some species of recognition of the popular will. For when the inevitable struggle comes, it will be the less fierce in proportion as the original right of the reigning house has been badly defined or early curtailed. Nothing is more certain than that, in every revolution fought out between the power of the crown and the will of the community, both parties have been in the right. On the side of the reigning house there is a long prescriptive and hereditary right, founded on the only title which has been recognized at the foundation of any ordinary kingdom, force; on the side of the people there is a growing political self-consciousness and the indefinable conviction born along with it, that, however the political control above them has been initiated, it cannot and must not be maintained except by the popular will. If, as in the case of the French people, this growing force



is pent too long by a too logical adherence on the part of the reigning power to what has silently but surely become an antiquated title of possession, the result is fury and madness; for according as this transitional crisis between two irreconcilable claims is retarded or let go is it violent or mild. Nothing is clearer in early history than the inability of monarchs and chieftains to recognize any other reason for their high position than their own or their ancestors' prowess; and nothing is clearer in later history than a determination on the part of the people to evade this conclusion at all hazards, and by a constitutional fiction* to suppose that the government never has been there except for the purpose of securing law and order. The tendency to regard the people as existing for the sake of the government, so clear in early monarchies, and the opposite tendency to regard the government as existing for the sake of the people, are in many minds never wholly separated. That passionate attachment to dynasties and the person of royalty, rising, when the monarch has qualities personally worthy of admiration, or even mere external beauty, into a reckless devotion which, while it blinds

* To such an extent is this feeling carried, that many writers seem to regard themselves as under a sort of sacred necessity of proving early monarchies to be as limited, and early popular assemblies as omnipotent, as possible. Even the *Germania* of Tacitus lies under the imputation of being intended as a reproof to an age socially and politically degenerate. Owing to the imperfection of historical record, no theory as to the origin of government can be established by actual evidence. It remains, then, for the reader to judge whether or no the general argument of this work is sufficient to warrant the universal application of a theory which in certain cases only can be definitely proved.

the reason, ennobles the heart, contains within it a tacit ratification of the original claim on which all monarchy is founded. But on such surrender of personal rights, pure and admirable as the motive is in itself, have been based the oppression of peoples and the violation of justice ; while, on the other hand, the confusion caused by the inability of the human mind to pass readily from the conception of a loyalty which it owes its sovereign to a loyalty which it owes itself, has been the fruitful cause of the failure of republics. The one idea, carried out, results in the loss of political liberty ; the other, in the loss of an invaluable source of altruistic education, and, if hastily carried out, in the creation of a type of character in which political self-sufficiency and arrogance leaves little room for the assertion of anything but the claims of self. In the greatest political revolutions which this world has seen, the struggle has raged between the attachment to a person on the one side, and the attachment to an idea on the other.

Hero-worship, as an element in morality, can never wholly be eliminated ; and where the attempt has been made, and the image hurled temporarily from its seat, the impotence of an idea, be it never so enthusiastic in its first promulgation, to bind men together in equality and brotherhood for any length of time has been but too clearly seen. Temporarily diverted, the thoughts and feelings of men tend inevitably back to the old channel, graven deep through years of evolution, and the great mass of mankind, unable to sustain the attachment to

abstract ideals to which their cultivated leaders would urge them on, necessarily turn sooner or later to the worship of persons, and idolize their statesmen when they can no longer idolize their king. Yet because the transitional crisis between two great moral stages has never yet been successfully accomplished, we are not, therefore, necessarily to cling to the imperfect old. The rational end of political existence remains the same, though attempts to formulate it more clearly may necessitate a certain amount of moral destruction, the necessary preliminary of recomposition; and that rational end is the perfection of law and government.

Finally, we may take the relation of morality and law to be as follows:—that harmony which morality aims at law secures, first in its own interest, and, finally, in the interests of morality.

It may be urged that this relation, if in some cases a correct representation of fact, is not invariable, and that, on the contrary, law can be proved to have originated independently of a supreme control. The best answer to this objection is that an organization which is based on customary law and can dispense with a political control is, from the point of view of progress, absolutely worthless. It cannot be too frequently insisted that an evolutionary theory of morality is concerned firstly with the history of those states that have eventually presented finished moral systems and examples of advanced civilization to the world, and only secondly with those peoples that have failed to do so. Now, it may be con-

fidently affirmed that there has been no leading nation at any time in the world's history which has not illustrated the relations of morality and law that have been sketched above. And, on the other hand, it is equally true that communities which show traces of another relation between morality and law, such as those village communities where law appears to be merely fossilized custom, in so far as they have been subjected to this form of law alone, have lacked the conditions which develop a high form of morality and civilization, since no such morality or civilization has resulted. Whatever causes may be assigned for the failure, the fact of that failure is sufficient to justify the evolutionist in his disregard for these communities, since he is not concerned with the possible human relations which might have given rise to a morality, but with the actual human relations which have given rise to the most advanced forms of morality. Now, that tendency to an antagonism which will eventually place some individual at the head of the community may be suspended under certain conditions; but if so suspended, history shows that the community will also suffer from want of progressive power, and not until antagonism resumes its operation will the community emerge from a torpor presenting the appearance only of a comparatively advanced morality. Harmonious relations existing among the individuals composing a community may be the result either of a properly directed energy or of the absence of energy. The Romans exhibited the one, and

the Esquimaux exhibit the other. But history has thought fit to concern itself rather with the Romans, and the material and data for an evolutionary theory of morality are chosen on the same principle.

Finally, that relation between morality and law by which it is here contended that the conception of law is generated from an irresponsible supreme power, if it can be disputed from the point of view of the individual, cannot be disputed from the point of view of any one of the small antagonistic sections from which history teaches us that every large nation has been made up. The theory does not require that a large civilization shall have arisen by the simple enlargement of a single community, or that the supremacy of a single man in that community shall have given rise to the relation between morality and law. If such was the *à priori* standpoint, it would not find verification, for there is no nation which has so expanded. Granting, then, that the antagonism has been suspended in certain single communities which exhibit law without a distinctive authoritative control, yet the tendency to antagonism as between community and community is unimpaired, and it is out of this antagonism that the supreme control, eventually to be called government and law, results. The necessary precursor to the growth of any considerable political body, and consequently the necessary condition of any considerable instance of men in wide moral relations, is seen in history to be the forcible amalgamation of what have been distinct political bodies, whose natural instinct for self-govern-

ment has been crushed out by violence and fraud. Under this aspect conquest becomes law, and it is the struggle for superiority, and no other process, which has initiated the supreme control. In fact, the conclusion of previous chapters is confirmed, that without contest there is no progress ; and to this we may add the further proposition, that where there is contest among early communities an arbitrary supreme power is evolved. Therefore, that aspect of law which begins in violence is, from the evolutional point of view, normal, while other aspects, since the communities which they characterize are either barren of civilization or are rendered fruitful by virtue of a later conquest, are exceptional, and may therefore be disregarded.

But such cases, though without direct bearing on the history of civilization, have still a speculative interest. If we should wish to classify them, they would seem to be instances of a spurious form of that instinct of order and self-government which is eventually necessary to moral progress. It is further to be remarked that the term law, as used in the ordinary discussions as to the relation of morality and law, is somewhat ambiguous, when made to comprehend at one time the customary regulations which grow up among a people, at another a supreme political control. For these two ideas are perfectly distinct, and possibly the converging influence of both of these factors is necessary for a progressive civilization, while, taken separately, the more valuable factor of the two is the political control, and is the

necessary complement to a body of customary law. For no effective regulation of any considerable community is possible under the mere influence of custom, while a supreme authority might well be conceived as organizing a state without the aid of any customary law.

The point at which a system of customary law conspicuously fails, and where most need is evident of a central authority is in settling satisfactorily—that is, in consonance with the requirements of a progressive morality—the relation of the various combinations which go to make up even the earliest form of community. In proportion to the vitality of such combinations is their disposition to infringe one another's rights. If such a proposition is true, as it certainly is, of combinations in the present day, it can with much greater confidence be affirmed of a period deficient in the rudiments of conscious self-restraint. Hence there is an alternative future before communities which have developed various combinations, family and otherwise, or which find themselves in close geographical relation with other communities: either they respect each other's rights, or, in other words, they are devoid of any active spirit of rivalry, in which case they fossilize; or, if they possess the proper spirit of rivalry, there is needed some central authority to prevent recurrence to violent and destructive excess. Customary law is not calculated to initiate one of the most valuable functions of law, the repressive function, and one which is originally, in a measure, inseparable from personal influence.

One of the chief functions of law is, as has been already stated, to protect the growth of a higher morality. If this repressive function of law is needed to repress a criminal disposition in certain individuals, it is equally needed to repress the antagonism of combinations. Now, the antagonism of combinations is the indispensable condition of vitality. To keep this antagonism within bounds there is need of a political control, and it is in the growing need for this political control that the early communities of the West differed from those of the East. To what has been urged in previous chapters as to the relation between progress and antagonism, it is unnecessary to add more. But the point of interest here is that, if the previous reasoning is correct, the conception of a political control is inseparable from the conception of law in an advancing community, and in those very districts of the East from whence are derived instances of self-imposed and customary regulations, it has been left for the advent of the British power to complete the normal order of things, and bring these communities within the operation of the conditions necessary for really national development.

While it is necessary, in a statement of the relation between morality and law, to have a place for the influence of customary rules of conduct, by far the most important influence from the evolutionary and progressive point of view must be claimed for the repressive tendencies of supreme power. To the objection of Sir Henry Maine, that early law, as we find it, is customary,

may be given the same answer as that given to the assertion that the origin of communities is characterized by "ultra-legality." As the patriarchal form is not the only origin of communities, so neither is custom and fossilization the necessary starting-point of progressive peoples. The basis of observed fact offered in support of the theory is insufficient to warrant a large general conclusion as to the preponderance of customary law over that issued by chiefs and heads. Yet, even if this can be proved, it does not involve the conclusion that the supremacy of an individual is not a necessary feature in the evolution of morality. For, as Sir Henry Maine admits, though it may be improper to employ the legal conceptions of the School of Austin "of law in certain stages of human thought, they nevertheless correspond to a stage to which law is steadily tending, and which it is sure ultimately to reach" ("Vill. Comm.," lect. iv. p. 70). And if for the scholastic conceptions of the School of Austin we substitute the idea of the repressive function of law, it is very hard to imagine that this repressive function in the hands of an individual has not been necessary at the first starting-point. For while the presence of customary law is more easily detected, it may well be that the yet indispensable influence of some governing body in time past should have left no trace, for it would exist under those very tendencies to violence which, as has already been remarked, leave least record. Customary law itself is not the final term, and must also have had some origin. Some one must still initiate, and

it is not unfair to suggest that the *onus probandi* rests with the opposite side to show that this initiation is not the result of a forgotten authority. Whether this be so or not, it is sufficient that no civilization or morality of any standing has been evolved in the world's history without the operation sooner or later of that supreme authority which has been argued to be the result of the normal operation of the law of antagonism.

CHAPTER XI.

FIRST MORAL COMBINATION: THE FAMILY.

IT has been shown that morality is in its origin combination. The first combinations into which individuals are found universally to arrange themselves, are those formed in various ways and with various customs, but with the same object, that of satisfying natural instincts and of providing for the rearing of the young. On the hypothesis of the law of antagonism, it follows that such groups would be the first to afford internal shelter for the development of morality.

At first sight it might seem that what the most common form of family grouping may have been—patriarchal, matriarchal, polygamous, or polyandric—is comparatively immaterial, so long as there have been formed groups of some sort liable to collision with other groups, and that the multiplication of separated portions of the human species into whatever kinds of groups would be a sufficient basis of fact for the theory that traces the evolution of morality to the interaction of antagonistic groups. What the first rudiments of society may have been in those unknown regions beyond the

reach of history, or even for some time after history has commenced, is, indeed, immaterial; but when a certain standard of civilization has been reached, it would seem that the conditions out of which alone morality can be evolved become considerably narrowed. As has been already insisted, it is never to be forgotten, in endeavouring to trace the evolution of morality, that of all the different races that have appeared and disappeared on the surface of the earth, only a limited number have succeeded in giving to the world a high code of morality. Given individuals under certain early surrounding conditions, morality is wholly out of their reach; the scientific study of the growth and origin of morality can only proceed hand-in-hand with the study of the conditions under which, at certain times in the world's history, that morality has appeared.

It is only, then, among this limited number that the antecedents of morality can legitimately be sought, seeing that all the rest, through the absence of some necessary factor, have produced nothing that is worth terming morality. The features presented in the moral and sociological development of these nations are what may be termed for the present purposes normal, while the abnormalities of such as have failed to emerge from barbarism may be left on one side as at present without value, though of importance to future students of the evolution of morality. For it is by comparison of the evolutionary history of those nations that have evolved a civilization with the history of those that have failed

to do so, that the essential and unessential conditions of moral progress will be finally distinguished. An inquiry so exhaustive is beyond the scope and power of the present work. Among institutions not tending to moral progress, or at least among institutions prevalent through nations that have not contributed to the advancement of the world, may be placed all those that tend to diminish the importance of family life. This, long a commonplace of history, derives new importance from the fact that the family constitutes the first natural combination.

However barbarous life and habit may be, yet if there is this one element of family cohesion, it ensures a community of feeling between the members of each family, keen in proportion to the danger from without. Though the moral value of family relations has already been the theme of many ; though we know from Austin that we should act "at the point of the greatest effect," namely, the family, and from Burke that "to love the little platoon we belong to in society is the germ of all public affections ;" yet from the point of view of antagonism the family acquires a deeper importance still. If it be recognized as a conspicuous factor in moral evolution from the point of view of theories which offer no hint of the tendency to universal rivalry which the world exhibits, of infinitely greater importance must the family seem when the truth is grasped that its appearance is coincident with a change in the direction of the law of antagonism which thus exempts the members of

the family group from direct hostility. And thus, as we are taught that masses were thrown off from the fierce contention of the gaseous elements of the solar system, which by internal and external action have at length become habitable planets ; so amid the ceaseless contention of organic beings are formed centres which, by internal and external action, by the internal action of family affection and parental authority, and the external pressure of hostility, are eventually found capable of supporting the production of the highest forms of morality. That start which the family secures as the initial centre of morality in a progressive race it afterwards retains, and, as the sphere of action enlarges around it, continues not only to progress, but to practice a code far in advance of that which regulates any other department of life. Before civilization has advanced, and when the rational element in morality, which eventually rises superior to time and place and condemns departure from a fixed standard, is hardly as yet formed, the advantage which family cohesion ensures does not appear so marked. But this is because to a trained moral instinct the loss is more apparent than the gain, and the family feuds which are conspicuous in the early history of even the most civilized peoples, if revolting on their own account, are yet indicative of advantageous moral tendencies, namely, an active spirit of rivalry and a power of close combination. But as we advance in civilization, by the operation of a law with which Mr. Herbert Spencer has familiarized the world, and to

which it will again be necessary to refer in connection with other forms of combination, that structure which was originally advantageous tends to become a hindrance to further development. As centralization sets in, and the various parts which before were antagonistic become dependent on a single political control, the use of the smaller family combinations in forming barriers against bloodshed and violence is superseded, for this function is now performed on a larger and more effective scale by political authority. But the tendency to fierce family feuds still remains, and has been at times exceedingly difficult to quell, and it is not until this antagonistic spirit is modified that the further benefit of the institution of the family is felt. Still, for reasons obvious to whomsoever will consider the economical conditions of even the most barbarous existence, and the influence of political control, it has rarely happened that a race has been divided into separate antagonistic families. The family association is habitually enlarged into that of the clan by the marriage of sons and daughters, and the benefit of the larger association is too obvious not to be appreciated. So long as the tendency to family feuds and bloodshed is successfully repressed, the institution of the family remains as one of the most valuable aids to a struggling morality.

The course of ethical evolution is to substitute abstract principle for mere impulse and the accidents of social and moral composition. In the absence of family life some education of the sort is gained ; but it is only

where society is based on the institution of the family that any educational progress in abstract principle is made. Granting that the evolutionary antecedents of moral notions are difficult to verify, yet there is one at least of obvious importance, the influence of which is too little taken into account. Whatever mystery clings about the notion of duty in its relation to the ideas of right and wrong, and cannot be resolved into the inherited instinct of the necessity of self-sacrifice and the individual perception of utility, is largely due to the unquestioning veneration with which the child from its earliest infancy is accustomed to receive the teaching of its elders. To any one who will observe the arbitrary stress which has continually been laid upon the obedience of children throughout the history of the world, the way in which analysis of the necessity of a distasteful course of action is peremptorily checked, and the inquiry abruptly stopped by the categorical imperative of their superiors, and to any one who will further consider that too close an inquiry into the ultimate reason of right action must have been so checked from the very beginning, from a secret fear of disclosing prematurely the too meagre and utilitarian basis which is all that the parent has logically to offer, it will possibly not seem trivial or absurd to attribute the constraining force of moral ideas largely to this practice, nor to believe that the grown man invests an abstract idea with an authority which is mainly due to continual association of the parental command with a given course of conduct.

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The voice of authority, so wonderfully impressive to young minds dimly struggling with infantile problems of existence, invests the path of duty with a cogency and imperativeness never after to be wholly effaced.

Whatever course of conduct, even the most immoral, had from generation to generation been in this way impressed on receptive minds, there is little doubt that it would come to have a binding force irrespective of its antisocial tendency ; indeed, there is evidence to show that the most immoral acts have from time to time in the history of mankind been practised for no other reason than that of custom and authority. Seeing that such may be the result with regard to acts that are in themselves either indifferent or positively obnoxious to the welfare of society, is it a matter for astonishment that when the parental injunction accords, in the case of generally accepted moral notions, with whatever of inherited tendency there may be to altruism, the combined operation of these harmonizing principles should invest moral ideas in a certain order of minds with a cogency that reckons utilitarian aids to conduct to be worse than useless ?

But, it will be asked, from whence this tendency to insist categorically on the right action of children ? whence this original acceptance of moral notions ? The assumption on which the present theory of morals is based is that, if the first tendency of all organic beings is towards antagonism, the second is towards some species of happiness. When individual antagonism is

resolved into the antagonism of combinations, the human mind is left free to adopt measures for ensuring the gratification of the second impulse.

But granting certain intellectual antecedents—and to postulate so much is no greater demand on the variety of nature than is continually being made through other domains of natural selection—within the precincts of the family the lesson inherent in the fact of combination is enabled to take effect, not because of any exaggerated desire on the part of the head of the family to impart moral instruction, but simply for the sociological reason that this is a portion of humanity railed off from the turmoil of antagonism and reconciled by consistent aims. The only case in which we can count on a high general tone of morality from the average man is where there is no temptation to the reverse; where he is shut off from sociological conditions that tend in a direction contrary to morality. It will subsequently be shown that even in civilized life, where some advance has been made in abstract moral theory, and where a high moral standard is professed, this is the case, and that only under the most favourable sociological conditions is this profession in any approximate way realized. If, then, under the most favourable conditions shelter in the heart of a moral combination is required for the production of morality, much more must this be the case where abstract principle is as yet non-existent, and where the difficulty is to create a standard rather than prevent dereliction from such standard when created.

That relation of individuals to each other which is required to constitute harmony of relations within the family combination is taken as the measure and model of all human existence. The highest moral standard and ideal is but a generalization from that department of life which exhibits human relations in their least selfish and antagonistic form.

Whatever tendency may exist at various times in the early history of communities to supersede the family as a moral combination by some other form of moral combination, such as the mediæval guilds, yet its place as the first moral combination which in the course of nature arises cannot be denied. However its influence may vary, it has never, among nations pretending to any degree of culture, fallen altogether out of sight ; for if, as in the Spartan discipline, education was temporarily removed from out of its jurisdiction, it was only that parental veneration might be the more sternly enforced. The functions of the family as a factor in the evolution of morality may, then, be regarded as twofold : firstly, it creates that moral combination necessary, evolutionally speaking, to give a new direction to egoism ; secondly, it supplies a field for the development of a rational view as to what is desirable in life—cessation from antagonism. It is this second function, a natural consequence of the first, which is most prominent and most valuable in modern life, where physical antagonism has been almost entirely relegated to the quarrels of nations, and where the necessity for the mutual protection of one member of a family by another no longer exists.

It is within the circle of the family that what we may call moral individualism first takes its rise. The current of the world's antisocial forces is turned aside from the heart of this magic circle, and it is the individual moral initiative which a man learns within the family which enables him to stem the full force of the current when he enters the reckless, self-seeking world. If it can be laid down as a general law of moral evolution that the morality of even the grown man tends to differ in proportion to the strength of temptation to the contrary, what hope would there be for the appearance of a high moral tone among weak and unformed characters, were it not for the moral seclusion ensured by private life. It is by generalization from particular acts of morality that an ideal of conduct is learned. Such individual acts appear, it is true, throughout the whole moral surface of the world in various forms of self-sacrifice ; but they appear in such shapes as generally to postulate some correlative injustice against which the self-sacrifice is a protest, and it is only within the heart of a moral combination that the general scheme of conduct which they authorize can be carried into effect. Private life is the standard to which we unconsciously refer when we measure other whole departments of life and call their morality lower. If an abstract ideal were alone our standard of comparison, as measured by this all acts would be the same ; it is by comparison of one morality with another, and of both with the ideal, that the difference of degree is introduced. Therefore the nearest

approach which life exhibits to this ideal—the rule, namely, of family affection—is our real standard of morality.

On the moral influence of woman a word has already been said. Yet it is impossible to discuss the influence of the family without at the same time rediscussing the influence of woman, to whom, under this aspect, it would hardly be too much to attribute the greater part of the moral advance which has at any time in the world's history been won. Though at first sight it might appear that whatever amelioration has been effected by personal effort has been effected, not by woman, but by the great moral heroes of mankind, yet, in the first place, it is plain that they have owed their influence to insistence on the more essentially feminine virtues of gentleness and love. In the second place, the real reformation of the world is brought about by effort not isolated but diffused, and no influence can for one moment be weighed in the scale against that exercised throughout the course of civilization by ever-recurring types of perfect womanhood. And even granting an unrivalled grandeur in the life and character of the great teachers of mankind, yet such teaching would have been for ever lost but for two great facts in the history of evolution, which are in reality one—the institution of the family and the existence of woman.

Though it is but the idle prompting of man's selfish fancy which would limit the sphere of woman's usefulness, either in the present or in the future, to the family, yet in the past it has necessarily been so limited.

The time has already gone by for regarding the woman who is not a wife as a species of anomaly, for which no provision has been made in the economy either of man or nature. Yet for so long as the title to the recognition of the world has been either physical or intellectual strength, of which she is without the one, and has been prevented from attaining the other, it has been impossible for woman to make her influence systematically felt beyond the range of family life. Man has indeed abused the disproportionate strength with which he has found himself endowed, and has taken advantage of that physical weakness which has robbed woman of the means of self-defence. Yet as he advances in civilization he endeavours to teach himself the honour that is due to the gentler influences of life. Little respect can indeed be felt for that lying spirit of romance in obedience to which man has at all times been prone to invest woman with a hollow and fleeting supremacy during courtship, to be shortly withdrawn and forgotten when the occasion is served and it pleases him to resume his temporarily abrogated rights. Yet some gratitude is perhaps owing if he has been constrained to offer her the homage of his gentler moods and to protect her as far as possible from the dangers and fierce turmoil of the world. Sheltered within the family combination, woman is free to make use of the highest of all moral principles, and one which is peculiarly her own, the motive of love. For though both love and fear are necessary in every educational system, the

greater praise is due to those that can effectually wield the principle of love.

With the closing words of Tennyson's "Princess" still fresh in our ears, it would be superfluous to dilate upon the moral value of a true companionship between man and woman. But upon the moral value of woman as a mother a word may perhaps be added to what others have already said. It is woman who has at all times held the future of mankind in her hands; for to her has necessarily been entrusted the task of laying the very foundation on which the circumstance of life is afterwards to build, of inculcating unwearying resistance to the wrong and unhesitating acceptance of the right. What many great men have owed to the influence of their mothers is already well known. Yet this is but a half-statement of the debt which mankind owes to maternal training, for it is not great men alone who have derived from early discipline the motives and principles which have supported them throughout life. By far the greater portion of education consists, not in eliciting greatness, but in preventing its opposite. It is but one of the happy accidents of life which directs to whose lot it falls to nurture genius in its cradle, and to give the proper direction to the childish aspirations of the future leaders of mankind. If there had been a thousand more great men, the world would probably discover that the list of noble mothers would need increasing in almost the same proportion. It is not every Cornelia who possesses in her children the noble material of a Gracchus

upon which to work, and the world can never know, but can only guess at, the countless number of women to whom it owes, not the comparatively easy task of encouraging genius, but the more difficult one of contending successfully with a naturally vicious disposition. The hundreds of honest men for whose usefulness the world is indebted to careful early training, could they be known, would form a more striking testimony to the moral value of woman than the occasionally conspicuous creation of a hero.

The relation, then, of woman to great moral or religious theories is evident; for while their appearance is but occasional, and their influence apt to wane, the influence of woman, on the other hand, is a permanent factor in the moral education of mankind. As mistress of the child-destinies of the world, she stands between the promulgation of any great religious impulse and its practical realization in the conduct of succeeding generations, and he who would reach the sympathies and permanently influence the moral welfare of mankind, can achieve his object only through the heart of woman.

CHAPTER XII.

FORMS OF MORAL COMPOSITION.

FROM the conditions of early evolution it is now necessary to turn to the morality of the present day, with a view to discovering whether there are, within the limits of each political body, any phenomena which support the theory that morality is the result of its opposite, destructive antagonism. As has already been seen, in accordance with a well-known evolutionary law, the conditions originally necessary for the growth of morality become finally hindrances to its further development. The first proof of this truth has already been incidentally discussed at length, and consists in the shock to moral feeling caused by the destructive antagonism of societies. Combined antagonism is necessary for the creation of active sympathy. It is by the formation of antagonistic political centres that the transition is brought about. A higher form of morality is thus gained, but the lower is not got rid of altogether. Relegated to another sphere, it still continues to play its part ; but from the higher standpoint thus gained, man is enabled to condemn a portion of his habitual action. By a power of intro-

spective analysis and observation of moral phenomena, he is made conscious of a difference in moralities. From the observation of unity within a limited combination, he rises gradually to the conception of universal peace, and frames rules for the attainment of such an end, calling them moral laws. Armed with these, he returns to the examination of life, to find little else than subject for condemnation. But an examination of the laws of moral progress tends to throw a more hopeful aspect on some phases at least of moral aberration. The iniquity of which he is, nationally speaking, guilty towards opposed combinations, is the price which he pays for the ability to condemn his own actions. As moral individualism gathers strength, it is enabled to condemn what are, historically speaking, the conditions of its growth, become now, from a higher standpoint, a hindrance to further progress. Sociological laws persist in their operation even after their effects have been seen to be pernicious ; men, under certain conditions, habitually perform actions which from an individual standpoint are reprehensible.

But it is not only political societies themselves which are antagonistic. The same law of moral composition which originated political centres, continues to operate within those political centres after they are formed, creating numerous antagonistic combinations within the body politic. It will be found that a large portion of those phenomena which, on the ordinary system, are hopelessly set aside as aberrations, and which form a

huge mass of exceptions such as are usually found to accompany an unscientific classification, are to be ascribed to the operation of the laws of combined antagonism within the nation itself. It is not to be expected that all divergences from an ideal code can be so explained. But the worth of a moral classification is so much simplified by this method, that, even if there were no other reason for its acceptance, a strong presumption in its favour would be established on these grounds alone. And though all moral aberrations do not admit of explanation by the theory of combined antagonism, yet they admit of being grouped according to a theory of individual antagonism. For such as do not belong to the region of combination, are largely due to forms of individual antagonism, reckless of the interests of others ; while, finally, many lower forms of conduct may be ascribed to that besetting sin of non-progressive peoples, want of antagonism or of that spirit of emulation which makes men reckless not only of the interests of others, but of the interests of self besides, and leaves them without other aims than the passing pleasure of the moment.

Man, it has been said, is by nature a social animal ; he loves the companionship and presence of his own kind. But in this principle alone we cannot base a system, or explain the growth of our present morality from early conditions. If he loves companionship, he also loves ascendancy, either individual and private, over such companions, or a divided ascendancy with those

companions over another similar body. The innumerable combinations which meet us in history must be ascribed to the action of the laws of individual antagonism, which drives men, through want of ability to secure their private supremacy, to seek supremacy in common. The antagonisms of social, political, and ecclesiastical bodies, which make up the far greater portion of internal history, all serve to show the vast operation of the law of antagonism, and of the struggle upon which each individual enters, to prove, in some way or another—be it physical, intellectual, or moral—his own individual ability, either directly by his own actions, or indirectly, through the excellence of that combination with which he is himself identified. The phenomena of combination within the limits of a state may be regarded as a sort of compromise between the desire for individual self-assertion and the necessary recognition of the claims of others to a similar indulgence, through alliance with whom, too, the individual is occasionally enabled to enjoy a more complete individual ascendancy than he could unaided have secured for himself. And in that contradiction by which the most laudable objects have been at different times in the world's history professed by combinations, such as the Spanish inquisition, which have been at the same time absolutely reckless of the means they might adopt for the attainment of their end, or of the ninety and nine moral principles they might tread underfoot in their pretended anxiety to secure one, we may trace anew vice paying its homage

to virtue, and the greed of power, not openly daring to assert a creed of its own, marching with the banner of virtue ostentatiously unfurled before.

It has been found that, on the hypothesis of individual antagonism, combination is necessary to divert its fatal effects. But if a combination is actuated by a higher morality among its component parts, it is also actuated by a lower towards any external body ; and this effect is found to persist throughout all history, so that the reverse aspect of the first law of moral composition may in reality be stated as a second law, namely, that combinations, though composed of individuals, are actuated towards one another by a lower morality than that recognized by the ordinary individual standard.

In proof of this the phenomenon of war has been adduced. But before passing on to examine other relations of men to one another, it is necessary to glance at a species of counter-theory as to the phenomenon of war.

For there is an opinion, more or less widely prevalent, that it is mainly or even solely the ambition of kings and princes that throughout history has plunged the world in war. Such a view can only be maintained in ignorance of all the phenomena of combination, and in defiance of the true import of history. Wherever the boundaries of two nations have approached each other, conflict has been imminent ; whenever their outposts have touched, it has begun. Borrowing from physiology what, in view of the relations of organisms throughout

the world, is something more than a metaphor or analogy, we may say that the irritation set up by the contact of the social tissue of opposing social organisms inevitably produces conflict. As has already been pointed out, it does not require much penetration to see that the reason for national quarrel, if not actually subsequent to the fact of conflict, is almost invariably a subordinate and comparatively trifling feature. Even within our own personal experience we may frequently have the opportunity of observing that the mere sight of one body of men by another body with antagonistic aims and object of existence, is cause enough for conflict ; the pretext is voluntarily supplied by one side or the other, or invented by the aggressor. The question of wrong alleged is subordinate to the primary instinct of antagonism.*

It is not, however, necessary to deny altogether the influence of princes and leaders upon the bodies under their control, and a place has already been specially assigned for this influence. But the tens of thousands who have in history recklessly sacrificed their lives in war at the bidding of an individual have done so, firstly, by virtue of the fact that they were representing one of the two opposing sections of mankind, and showing the fierce instinct of antagonism which such struggles necessarily call forth, and only secondly by virtue of their passionate adherence to an individual. Indeed, so far is the belief that war is due to the ambition of monarchs

* "Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?"—"No, sir ; but I bite my thumb, sir."

from being true that the reverse proposition is a much nearer statement of the truth, that the antagonistic propensities of nations have at least increased, if they have not given rise to, the ambition of monarchs. It stands to reason that the power of the ruler is augmented by the power of the nation of which he is the head, and that to extend that power is naturally an end which he may continually place before himself. But to argue from this that to destroy high offices and powers will be to remove the cause of national quarrel, is absolutely unwarrantable. Though a pacific disposition on the part of its rulers may not be without its influence on the international policy of a people, it is utterly insufficient to entirely shape its course. Pacific rulers have before now been forced into war, and the warlike propensities of others restrained, by the influence of their subjects. Because the initiative generally proceeds or appears to proceed from the chief personage of a realm, to argue that such a personage is the chief cause is to forget the natural interdependence of the parts of a political body. The governing power is naturally the organ of international policy and edict, and if in earlier days the policy of nations has been more readily dominated by their princes, the main reason for this lies in the fact that early irresponsible rulers gathered in their own persons a much larger portion of the functions of government than in more modern times. But if the personal influence of a warlike prince is not without its effect, could it produce that effect in the

absence of a national disposition for conflict? Granting that some wars may have been directly attributable to the ambition of monarchs, have republics, therefore, been free from all lust of territory and power? Has democracy never been actuated by a desire to extend its dominions? Had there been no kings and queens in history to find cause for quarrel it would have been found elsewhere, and national conflict would have been not one whit the less frequent.

There is, therefore, in this objection no valid reason against the statement of a third law of moral composition explanatory of the second, as follows :—

That combinations with like aims and objects are necessarily antagonistic.

In turning to the actual moral phenomena exhibited in the present conditions of society, it will be found that though considerable advance has been made in all departments of speculative morality, yet conduct has not advanced in a corresponding degree, and the result has been merely to increase the disproportion in certain departments of life between idle profession and habitual practice. From hence we may learn that the intellectual element in morality is operative with but few, while the morality of by far the larger portion is at the mercy of what may be called the circumstance of moral composition, which tends to evoke a different morality according as men are in different relations to those around them. For, even granting the presence of a strong individual guiding principle, it is seldom that a man can act out of

immediate relation to his fellow-creatures, or prevent that relation from having an effect upon his conduct ; and when this is so his active sympathies are, as a rule, bounded by his more immediate relation, even though it be but temporary, and his individuality becomes but as a straw in the current of humanity around him.

Though morality is here argued to have begun in combination, and though, in speaking of the forms of moral composition, we are still dealing, not with the individual, but with the unit of a larger whole, yet it is evident that men cannot perpetually act with reference to a combination, even though they are necessarily comprised within such a combination.

At that period of evolution where social morality must have arisen, the explanation of moral phenomena was only found possible on the assumption that the law of individual antagonism, which applies to all the rest of the animal world, applied also to man. But at this comparatively advanced period of evolution, through the institution of political control, and through the other causes which have been enumerated, besides the antagonism with which men on occasion regard one another, they may also regard one another with indifference, and this state of indifference or neutral association will be found the best starting-point from which to describe the actual forms of moral composition which men are found to undergo.

In dealing with the possible relations of men it is evident that they may be present to one another either

physically, in actual bodily contact, or ideally, by an effort of the imagination. The first resulting divisions then we will name physical neutral association and ideal neutral association. As an instance of physical neutral association, we may take an accidental assemblage of persons not united by a common aim; for it has been found necessary, for want of a better term, to restrict the word association to those collections, actual or ideal, where individuals are present to one another, but not united by a common aim, in contradistinction to combination where the individuals are so united.

Again, a man is conscious of ideal association on any and every occasion when he calls to mind the fact that he is one of an indefinite number of living individuals.

To begin with physical neutral association.

There is one important feature common to all forms of individual contact. If we are to treat masses of men, as it seems we must, as loose, temporarily formed organisms, the first difference to note between them and individual organisms—a difference, indeed, already well known—is that the tie which unites the component parts of the mass-organism is not physical, but psychological. The contact of mind with mind, made rapid by the senses of sight, speech, and hearing, is what unites the mass, and makes of it something which may be spoken of as possessing an individuality derived from, but different from that of its component parts. Of this psychological nexus the importance can hardly be overestimated, for it is by means of this nexus that the individuals com-

posing this loosely associated mass may be forced into acts which range in moral value from one end to the other of the moral scale. For this contact of mind with mind and of individuality with individuality, is a medium through which the most diverse initiative may be communicated, sufficient to produce either a band of heroes or a mass of contemptible cowards.

Such a mass is to the moralist what the liquids on which he wishes to superinduce molecular changes are to the chemist, with this difference, that Nature herself performs the experiments. For if it would be difficult actually to superinduce by way of experiment the changes here described, they can all at one time or another be separately observed in process. According to the motive which the moral experimentalist brings to bear upon the mass will they be completely disintegrated, partially assimilated into opposing groups, or bound together into a compact whole.

Now, though the present starting-point of neutral association may be thought to differ somewhat materially from the assumption of individual antagonism which is found necessary for the explanation of the moral phenomena of the world, yet it will be remembered that the want of antagonism is a feature not altogether new, but found to characterize non-progressive societies. If it is admissible to say that this quietude is the result of an absence of adequate motive for antagonism, then a parallel can be instituted between the state of neutral association from which it is here found convenient to

start, and those societies in which the individuals have found no adequate motive for competition. For just as such societies present only the spectacle of custom and fossilization until broken in upon by some shock from outside, so the condition of neutral association, though a convenient starting-point, presents no moral phenomena of any value until the latent antagonism of human nature is aroused by the sudden appearance of a sufficient motive. Accordingly, the departure from the standpoint of individual or combined antagonism will be seen to be but momentary and unessential, except for the purpose of the supposed experiment.

In proof that this difference of standpoint is not material, it will be shown that any strong motive brought to bear upon the mass results in some species of antagonism effecting its transformation either into a united whole, into disunited and rival portions, or into a state of individual antagonism which is without remorse. The antagonism inherent in the two latter kinds of transformation is plain: it is plain, also, that some species of antagonism is needed to produce the first result, for it is apparent, on reflection, that the only method of converting a disunited and aimless throng into a compact and united body is by supplying some motive which they all conceive of as an object to be striven for and attained. It is the condition of individual antagonism which will first be dealt with. In support of the theory of individual antagonism, it will be shown that men, whether actually or imaginatively

present to one another, have in reality their interests centred upon themselves, and are continually upon the very verge of becoming individually antagonistic. It will be found, too, that in the presence of numbers, given a selfish object, the attainment of which each may propose to himself as an individual end, and not as an end to be attained for the whole body, an influence apparently resides which has the effect of increasing the selfish antagonism on the part of each of the individuals.

Let us suppose the mass to be waiting outside any place of amusement. As soon as the door is opened, an immediate rush for seats takes place ; and this phenomenon, apparently trivial in itself, is, by the frequency of its occurrence and the invariable similarity of the moral truths which it presents, raised to the dignity of a scientific act with an evolutionary significance. Almost every individual under such circumstances has undergone a transformation for the worse, visible in the result, which is a surging and disorderly mass, or in the conduct of the individuals themselves, who exhibit a reckless and deliberate striving after petty and personal ends, such as all would be ashamed to profess were they acting as simple and responsible individuals.

Let us now suppose the crowd to have taken their seats inside the theatre or place of amusement, and let us suppose that by a cry of fire that motive has been superinduced than which none other more effectually separates the interests of individual men, and urges them against each other in a heartless and terrible struggle—

the fear of death. The result of such an alarm, as is but too well known, is a cruel death to many of the weakest and most helpless present—the women and children. The sudden fear of death has the power of eliciting the most cowardly form of antagonism—that which urges the individual to seek his safety at the expense of the safety of others.

Further, there is to be observed here that increased selfishness which appears to be the result of the influence of numbers. For if the members of that mass were taken individually, and placed in such a position as to make the cruel death by their own act of a woman or child the price of their safety, it would be brutal cynicism to suppose that, even if they were under the influence of an equally strong fear, all those individuals would buy their safety at such a cost. Not only our ideal anticipations, but our actual knowledge of mankind, lead us to believe that the case would rather be the reverse, and that we might count with certainty on many of them adopting the opposite alternative of self-sacrifice. But, further, where the opposite alternative is not that of self-sacrifice, but of a short pause in the presence of danger, which would eventually ensure the safety both of the selfish individual and of the possible victim, we can no longer hesitate to suppose that the greater portion of even average individuals would prefer to incur this short risk rather than sacrifice the life of a fellow-creature. Granting this, and remembering that in the majority of cases of panic perfect safety would be ensured to all by

a steady and orderly exit, we are driven to the conclusion that, if it is the sudden fear of death which causes the reckless individual antagonism, it is the presence in mass which increases it.

Similar are the phenomena of all cases of panic, such as flight from a field of battle, where individual fear has overcome both principle and the instinctive sense that in unity there is strength. Similar, too, is the disgraceful fear which sometimes seizes the passengers on a sinking vessel, and causes overcrowding of the boats.

In both such cases the truth of the dictum of Hobbes, which has already been discussed at length, is clearly exemplified, and the original relations between morality and constraining force may be traced; for the only effective method in such cases of putting an end to selfish individual antagonism is by the threatened use of a loaded pistol, or by the adoption of whatever means may have the effect of bringing back cowards to the consciousness that they are men "through the fear of some punishment greater than the benefit they expect from the breach" of the first principles of morality. Similarly, in the intellectual antagonism by which the main business of the world is carried on, and which breaks up the sphere of ideal association in a manner which will now be explained, no title of others to consideration is in most cases recognized except that which is ensured by the positive enactment of law.

In ideal association similar motives will be found to produce similar results. Neutral ideal association has

already been defined as the consciousness of the individual that he is a unit among other similar units, whom he regards with comparative indifference, as being without motive for antagonism. Though here, as well as in physical association, men may be described as in a state of potential individual antagonism, yet with many the habitual condition of their minds when undisturbed tends rather to ideal combination than association ; that is, they are inclined to regard their fellow-creatures with sympathy rather than indifference. For there are many philosophers and others who find it easier to be kindly disposed to their fellow-creatures at a distance than when close at hand. Still, for the purposes of moral investigation the conditions are practically the same ; a selfish motive has the same result as it has upon physical association. For even where ideal combination is complete, and ideal sympathy is felt with the whole human race, yet if a question is introduced turning upon the particular interest of the individual or the combination to which he belongs, the ideal unity is destroyed, and the mind becomes as the portion of a broken mirror, reflecting only its own separate and particular sympathies. The separate and particular interests which effect such a change are desire for wealth, rank, and power. For it is for such objects as these that men struggle against each other, and lose sight of such combined aims as are necessary for the cultivation of a high morality.

Similar, too, when by such motives they are reduced

to a state of individual antagonism, is the effect of the consciousness of numbers, and such importance does this phenomenon assume in all those cases where men are imaginatively present to one another, that an explanation of it must now be attempted.

When the object which an individual pursues is personal, there is present no wide consideration of the interests of humanity at large to correct that egoism in means which evolution shows to be the preponderating tendency in conduct. Therefore, given a personal end, an individual who is acting under no influence of combination tending to deflect him from a course of selfishness, is already potentially at the mercy of any temptation to use egoism in his means of attaining his already egoistic end. There are wanting but certain conditions to cause him to adopt these means. These conditions are supplied by the presence, actual or ideal, of numbers similarly occupied. Under the circumstances supposed, of a number of individuals in a condition of individual antagonism, there is this obvious reason in numbers tending to lower a moral standard—that each can excuse himself in the course adopted by a tacit reference to the example of others. Taking the case of death caused by overcrowding, no one can individually be blamed for the result ; the impulse was simultaneous, and each contributed no further share of selfishness than another. Each individual becomes as he sees those around, intensely egoistic, and from motives of self-defence pursues the same selfish course.

Under such forms of antagonism, the knowledge that no one can hope for any safety except that which he procures for himself, and that self-denial will be in all probability unnoticed and useless, produces the most intense form of selfishness. In ideal antagonism, in the intellectual struggle for the various objects of man's desire, a similar result is brought about. For there is constantly present to the mind of the individual the consciousness that others are occupied in a similarly selfish struggle, and the consequent conviction that forbearance from a similar selfishness will effect nothing except his own ruin by robbing him of the means of self-defence. The consequence is that where selfishness is more distinctly premeditated, as in economic morality, each grants that indemnity for the breach of the moral code which he himself demands, and the result is a general undefined, social indemnification, a relaxation of the pressure of the social sanction, at odds with the abstract moral code. Though the result of such individual antagonism may be terrible, yet each man's share in producing that result may seem to him inconsiderable, for each stands excused through the action of all. From hence it may be inferred that a large portion of the wrong action of mankind is not so much the result of inherent wickedness as of the mere instinct of self-defence. And it is, indeed, certain, as any one may assure himself by observation, that many would be inclined to forego a course of selfish striving if they could only be assured that others would do the same.

We have found, then, on inquiry into the forms of moral composition, or the possible relations of men to one another, that men on occasion regard one another with comparative indifference or languid interest, but that it only requires the suggestion of a selfish motive to convert them from this condition into a state of individual antagonism, and that this change may be regarded as taking place both when men are present to one another in fact, and when they are present to one another only in imagination. Accordingly, the forms of moral composition may, so far as they have been investigated, be classified as follows :—

1. Neutral association, physical.
2. Neutral association, ideal.
3. Individual antagonism, physical.
4. Individual antagonism, ideal.

Incidentally, also, there has been found reason for concluding that, given a selfish motive, the presence of numbers, either actual or ideal, has a depressing effect upon morality. The general result may therefore be summed up as follows :—

If upon a mass of individuals in a state of neutral association there is brought to bear an individual and selfish motive, the mass of individuals is resolved into a state of individual antagonism, and there follows a disposition on the part of each individual to a more selfish course of conduct than he would be otherwise inclined to adopt.

But there are other changes which may be super-

induced upon our hypothetical mass of individuals, and as we have seen their morality lowered by one disposition of the parts of the mass, so we may see it raised by another, quite independently of the moral principle which may be supposed to characterize each separate individual. From individual selfishness they may be raised, by the suggestion of a proper motive, to the relatively high morality which is distinctive of combined selfishness. Such a result would be brought about if we were to suppose the alarm of fire to have subsided, and a political agitation to have been started in the body of the theatre, dividing the house into Liberals and Conservatives, or a class agitation, dividing all present into opposing factions of rich and poor. For this would have the result of instituting strong momentary fellowship between the individuals composing the antagonistic parties. This we may call selfish physical combination.

Further, if we wish to see the highest forms of morality produced, we have but to suppose the suggestion of a motive appealing to the wide national interests of all present. As, for the purposes of experimentation, all possibilities falling within the limits of human nature are legitimate, we will suppose the threatened invasion of a national enemy, and a patriotic address to the House, with the result of creating a physical combination for the purpose of resistance. All present are, therefore, temporarily exhibiting the highest form of physical combination, where parts are ready to sacrifice themselves

for the whole, and which may therefore be called unselfish physical combination.

Again, it is easy to see that there is a form of ideal combination corresponding to the selfish physical combination which is constituted by a body of men actuated by national interests. For when the individuals composing such a body are ideally or imaginatively present to one another they constitute a selfish ideal combination.

Finally, those present are capable of rising to still greater heights of moral fervour, by means of ideal combination—a fervour which is, perhaps, less real and less enduring, but which is still more deeply suggestive of the possibility of a united world. For by a touch from the stage before them of that exquisite pathos which dramatic representation has at all times been powerful to produce, every single individual present can for the moment be made capable of realizing his human kinship with every other, and the ideal bond thus formed becomes co-extensive with the range of human sympathy.

To the existing classification of human relations we are, therefore, prepared to add—

5. Physical combination.
6. Ideal combination.

In order, however, to elucidate fully the relations of men to one another, it is necessary to take into consideration the fact that such alliances may be actuated by a difference of motive which may raise or lower them

in the moral scale, and that they may be distinguished according as their motive is selfish or unselfish. Combinations, therefore, may again be subdivided as follows :—

5. (a) Physical combination, where the end is selfish.

(b) Physical combination, where the end is unselfish.

6. (a) Ideal combination, where the end is selfish.

(b) Ideal combination, where the end is unselfish.

5. (a) Physical combination where the end is selfish is illustrated by those ever-recurring social antagonisms the account of which goes to make up the bulk of history. Both the external and internal effect of such alliance has already been largely discussed. Though powerful in its binding influence upon its members, and of inestimable value to the early evolution of morality, physical combination for a selfish end loses place in the moral scale because it is necessarily simultaneous with the perpetration of an absurdity and a wrong. With the advance of the intellectual element in morality this contradiction becomes clearer and clearer, until it is plain that the shock to moral feeling outbalances beyond all reasonable doubt the effect of that heroic example to which the collision of societies gives rise. And even if it be true, as is frequently averred, that the evil results of expiring patriotism can be traced in the selfish meanness of the ends which are commonly pursued in the world to-day, and in the absence of any large-hearted, generous aims, yet this is a state of mind inseparable

from the transitional period, whenever that period may arrive, between the antagonism and friendship of nations, when men, though losing the irrational attachment to a part, have not yet learnt the reasonable attachment to the whole. Such a movement, therefore, cannot be stigmatized as wholly retrograde. If the reanimation of unselfish endeavour is to be bought by a return to habits in which no beauty resides except on the supposition that men are innocent of conscious evil, if individual manliness can only be revived by a sacrifice of blood,—then the price paid may not only be too dear, but the lesson will be valueless, for the evolutionary conditions of its value are gone by.

Physical combination may be used for other purposes than the exertion of force. Yet there is this disadvantage attaching to a physical alliance which, even if it does not contemplate the use of force, is yet opposed in its interests to any other body, namely, that the physical presence of numbers contains what is apparently an evolutionary legacy, the continual suggestion of a possible resort to violence.

The abstract question of right or wrong, which has become more or less paramount for the individual, is forgotten in physical union, and that point of view tends to disappear in a resort to violence. Especially is this the case in revolutions. The mutually supporting relations between morality and law are removed, and from the return to primary instincts which ensues we may recognize the strength of evolutionary laws as compared

with individual moral principle, and the debt which public morality owes to mere organization.

5. (*b*) It will be seen, then, that if by the final classification of physical combination with an unselfish end is meant the resort to combined violence to procure that end, such a phenomenon would never yield the highest forms of morality. For violence is the negation of all higher forms of morality, and a lesson which depends for its teaching on the arbitrary exertion of force is doomed to lose its value in proportion to general intellectual and moral advance. Though it is conceivable that a physical alliance might be formed which, with perfectly pure moral aims, yet found itself compelled to use force, still the fact that in such a case the morality of the world is not beyond the range of violence, and that force is required in the prosecution of moral ends, implies such a disarrangement of the social organism, and such a want of harmony between the parts, as to prevent the use of force from ever being co-extensive with the highest forms of morality. There is, indeed, one well-known movement in history which might be quoted as the use of physical union for a high moral purpose, the Crusades. Yet from the point of view of the animating idea, the Crusades sink to the level of any of the other religious wars that have disgraced history. The best title that they have at any time to our consideration is the fact that they realized the temporary and partial union of many conflicting nationalities. Yet even this result was not due to the high religious motive that was

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professed. For had it not been that the Mohammedans were threatening the West, and that the struggle was in reality one of race-antagonism, Peter the Hermit would have preached in vain. Even granting the reality of religious fervour in the movement, yet from the evolutionary point of view the weakness of this passing burst of ideal enthusiasm, as compared with the solid results of national endeavour, is at once apparent, showing that moral evolution cannot reverse the ordained progress through objective and homely to ideal and abstract moral aims. Morality, attempting to disdain the humble support of mere human sympathies, and to soar too soon above the sphere of mere human aims, is destined to fall rudely to the ground. The mere want of proper leadership and organization, resulting in its turn from want of a binding human principle, has doomed the Crusades to be regarded rather as a piece of enthusiastic folly than as a serious or valuable fact in the history of the world. For who is there who does not feel the difference of moral teaching between Thermopylæ and Acre?

Physical combination, then, which seeks to prosecute its end by force, besides the inability to sustain attachment to an abstract ideal, cannot be co-existent with the highest type of morality, but is a correlative phenomenon implying injustice on one side or the other. For such is the nature of moral phenomena that in national or any other species of mass-conflict the right has never been wholly on either side, and even if it had been, neither

would have been therefore justified in destroying the other. The infliction of injury upon opposing bodies from the evolutionary point of view necessary, is from the abstract point of view unjustifiable, since physical alliance which uses force, if it has acted for good upon its own members, has acted for evil upon all external bodies.

There is, however, a feature in certain forms of physical combination which, under certain circumstances, is not without its value. It has been seen that one of the first observed properties in connection with the phenomena presented by men in masses is the rapidity with which the whole may be permeated by a common idea or sentiment. And not only this, but a given sentiment is found to gain intensity when shared by masses who are in physical contact; for human units, like inorganic units, are capable of being raised to a more enduring and glowing heat when in contact with one another.

If, then, the idea which is present to the mass is one of high moral calibre, it profits by whatever power may reside in the presence of numbers to intensify an impulse, and that this is by no means small is shown by the very recklessness of the ordinary action of masses.

There is one form of physical union which seems to turn to good account this mutual reassurance, and which enables men to confront a danger from which, single-handed, they might possibly have shrunk. No small part of the real heroism of the world may be ascribed to

those rescue-parties of which the rising prominence is one of the most ennobling features of the nineteenth century. The true elements of grandeur are there when every lifeboat is launched, and of a higher moral calibre than even in patriotic conflict, if the wider interests of humanity are in reality a concern to any. For danger and imminent peril is faced, not to preserve one set of lives by destroying another, but, on the contrary, the gain is co-extensive with humanity at large, while the heroism is the more in proportion as the danger is confronted with all the faculties in their normal state, and not intoxicated by the madness of battle-antagonism or dazzled by the circumstance of war. And if no tale of such self-sacrifice can vie in interest with stories of battle-heroism, it would be to forget the evolutionary history of our emotions and their predispositions, if we on that account gave the moral preponderance to the more falsely thrilling event. And though there is no heroism arising out of such circumstances which cannot be matched by an individual act of equal value, yet not only does the presence of sympathy, of a danger shared in common and for a noble end, tend to increase heroism, but also where that heroism would in the former case have been confined to one individual, it is now shared by the whole combination, and units of lesser fire are by a noble contagion raised to the temper of the best around them. Therefore, that form of physical combination which is used for purposes of mutual assurance and co-operation in the presence of a common human

danger, is alone found to possess the qualities entitling it to permanence under advancing moral conditions. All other forms, administrative, warlike, aggressive, belong to immature conditions, and are destined to disappear.

Defensive war, now more or less of a pretence, may one day be nearer reality. But even if it were possible for any nation to adhere to such a distinction, as has been seen, the dislocation of humanity, which is implied by the very necessity of defensive war, renders the connection plain between low moral conditions and the ordinary forms of physical combination.

6. (a) It is now necessary to examine the results of what has been here termed ideal combination. Under ideal combination of one sort or another, a vast number of moral phenomena can be advantageously reduced. It will be seen that, generally speaking, combinations are both physical and ideal. They are ideal where the component units are separated from each other, yet feel in sympathetic union for a given end; and they may become physical where any portion of these units are present in contact for the prosecution of such an end. If they are formed with a deliberate aim and are permanent, they are physical when the members are present, ideal when the members are separated. It is under this double heading that nations are included. Compatriots are united in idea continually, and the sense of this union for purposes of defence is continually operative upon international morality, actuating the policy and

shaping the conduct of the individual men who direct the affairs of the nation. Such a union becomes physical by the operation of the military section, which acts for the whole national body which it represents.

Of national combination enough has already been said. Turning to those antagonistic sections which are formed within the limits of the nation for the mutual aid of the members in achieving some common end, the chief representative sections are the great political parties into which every nation is in some measure divided. In the examination of political morality, the details of the phenomena of political bodies will be discussed. Here it is sufficient to say that the political subdivisions of a nation repeat the phenomena of antagonism which have been noticed in the national divisions of the world. Given a certain number of individuals, they inevitably tend to subdivide into rival combinations, supplying themselves with a reason for such action by that psychological law which directs men, if they cannot be moral, at least to give their conduct a moral pretext.

Political life, as exhibited in past history, and economic life, as exhibited in present history, are remarkable for supplying instances of a spurious form of combination, of which the object is not so much common to the body as a whole as individually selfish, for the better attainment of which each acts as the accomplice of all. For it would seem as if in some cases those who are already, for whatever reason, in-

clined to an action of which their conscience and unbiased moral instinct disapproves, purposely seem to avail themselves of that moral shelter which has already been seen to reside in numbers. In many cases, apparently, it is instinctively felt that companionship in guilt divides up the sum total of the responsibility of a guilty act into portions which press with proportionately less force on the individual conscience, and accordingly partnership is preferable to sole agency in guilt as much for this reason as for the actual aid that may be afforded towards the accomplishment of the object.* Yet, though remarkable, this form of combination does not demand a separate classification, since union even for the purpose of a low individual interest necessarily implies the presence of certain moral qualities of mutual reliance, without which the scheme would fall to the ground. In economic affairs the alliances that are formed have primarily an economic, and only secondarily a moral,

* Such a phenomenon is not unobserved in works descriptive of human action from an artistic, though not necessarily unscientific, point of view. Take, for instance, Scott's "Peveril of the Peak," ch. xxxv., where he makes Geoffrey Peveril say, "They are bold in guilt in proportion to the number among whom their crime is divided."

Or Lamartine's "Jeanne d'Arc." "On eût dit que les juges pervers ou fanatiques de cette grande cause avaient voulu se partager l'iniquité en un plus grande nombre afin de diminuer le responsabilité et l'horreur pour chacun d'eux."

Again, Scott supplies a curiously subtle reflection illustrating the loss of distinct personality in a crowd. The heroine of "The Betrothed" is advancing to reprove her retainers. "'How is this, my masters?' she said; and as she spoke the bulky forms of the armed soldiers seemed to draw closer together, as if to escape her individual censure" ("The Betrothed," ch. xxvii.).

aspect, being formed to increase the power of the individual. They are artificial rather than natural formations, and thus of minor importance for the purpose of throwing light upon evolutionary moral forces.

6. (*b*) In the preceding instances there can be detected the presence of a conscious purpose to make use of the increased power derived from united endeavour. Those phenomena which are originally produced spontaneously in accordance with the laws of moral composition are, as society advances, purposely produced for the better attainment of a certain end. Man learns to avail himself artificially of nature's methods in the world of ethics as well as in the physical world, and the influence of the individual consciously attempting to modify his surroundings rather than to suffer himself to be at the mercy of sociological conditions, becomes more and more apparent. Hence it is that the phenomenon of united endeavour can be directed towards an unselfish purpose, and we find societies which aim, not at their own good, but at that of the whole world. Though there is apparently a considerable advance in times when union for an unselfish end is possible, yet it will be found that, from the very nature of such unions, such attempts are doomed to failure. By uniting for the purpose, men have in all ages hoped to render inevitable the propagation of whatever doctrines they may have thought necessary for the regeneration of mankind. But the legacy which has been left by ages of evolution, in the form of certain tendencies of combination, cannot be summarily set

aside at the will of individuals; nor can philanthropic schemes of regeneration, however well meant, enable the regenerator to defy the laws which govern human relations. Such are the societies which are formed in this country for the purpose of forcing people into virtue by means of a spy system, itself both dangerous and immoral, and powerless, besides, even to alleviate the evil which it attempts to cure. The pernicious nature of all efforts that proceed on the assumption that mankind is more easily straightened than an iron plate has been sufficiently exposed by Mr. Herbert Spencer; but, as made by combinations professing a high moral purpose, such attempts here demand a further comment. Though the primary object may be the good of the world, the inevitable secondary object is to manifest the power of the society. In proving this it is not necessary to go further than the writings of Mr. Buckle, who has abundantly shown that the profession of a virtuous aim is not enough to secure the observation of the most elementary laws of morality in the furtherance of that aim. To attempt by any species of pressure to force a moral code upon society, is to usurp a function which government alone can be trusted to exercise, and which, even in a governmental form has always been sparingly used by intelligent nations. The complacent pride of superior virtue does not beget a frame of mind calculated to make an irresponsible society place the real good of the world before its own aggrandizement.

Of far higher moral value is the motive of those

societies whose aim is to improve the social and economical condition of their fellow-creatures, and to lessen the contemptuous gulf between class and class. But there is a deep objection to the success of philanthropic combinations even of this kindlier sort, an objection based on that tacit assumption of social equality which accompanies all scientific moral reasoning. The power to do good is a privilege, and if that privilege is in the hands of some by accident of birth or education, it is apt to stir a spirit of resentment which robs even kindness of its proper fruit. It is more blessed to give than to receive, and for that very reason the power to benefit others is not unnaturally coveted. As the test of reason is brought to bear on social arrangements, the fiction of a necessary dependence of class upon class is shattered. Though all must certainly do their duty in that state of life into which they are called, yet there is a wonderful elasticity of opinion as to the exact state of life into which any particular individual is called, and no one really disputes the fact that a man's real position is the one which he can win for himself. Along, then, with the relinquishment of the belief in a necessary distinction between class and class goes the relinquishment of the duty of gratitude on the part of the classes below for the mere charity offered them by the classes above. In the frequently sullen acceptance, or more sullen refusal, by the poor of well-meant efforts to alleviate their distress is hidden the unformulated but deeply felt demand, "Why are you in a position to

benefit me rather than I to benefit myself?" The best and noblest office which one human being can perform for another is to give him the means of self-improvement. All that can be urged in favour of the present systems of philanthropy is that they are a species of moral training for those that undertake them, and serve to keep alive the sense of the real interconnection of all classes. For as to any real or lasting benefit, such results are at any time infinitesimal, and will so continue as long as the merely impulsive factor, the wish to do good, is more conspicuous than the intellectual factor, the power of perceiving the right way of doing good. The good of any class must be worked out for itself, and cannot be received as a charity from others. Valuable for the securing of harmonious relations, and beautiful in itself as is the recognition of superiority in others, yet even when this tribute is offered from individual to individual it becomes pernicious at the point when admiration of another tends to weaken personal self-reliance and endeavour, while as offered from class to class it is valuable only in a military age, and, if prolonged, may become a weak and helpless acquiescence in the continued perpetration of social and political injustice.

On the other hand, the opposite attitude of social jealousy, born as it but too frequently is of mere ignorance and envy, may attribute all the superiority of the superior classes to accident and injustice, without taking account of the ability and more cardinal virtues

which have contributed to the attainment of the coveted power.

While, however, this distinction of class is inevitable, as on any rational view it must be for long years to come, it would not be just wholly to condemn combination for philanthropic purposes even on the ground of its actual inefficacy. The very inauguration of such attempts proves the existence of a feeling that there is something which demands rectification, and the visible manifestation of that feeling is the gradual evolutionary preparation for the change. It is this consideration which outbalances the counter-argument, that by temporary alleviation of misery we prolong the suffering by deferring the inevitable crisis of social reconstruction. Yet so evenly is the calculation balanced, that it is open for all to engage in or refrain from the active prosecution of philanthropic measures according as they feel the one or the other necessity to preponderate. In a healthy nation there will always be sufficient numbers on either side to hold the balance between impulsive generosity and philosophic self-restraint.

It will thus be seen that there are serious objections to any forms of combination which seek to thrust benefits of any sort upon the outside world, and that, by a necessity of moral composition, the benefits to be derived from this species of alliance are bounded by the extent of such an alliance, and cannot effectively be made sensible outside. The real interest of any corporate body must centre in its own existence, and the

only method of turning the egoism of any such body to good account is by making it to include as large a portion of the world as possible. For if the range of such an alliance were co-extensive with humanity, the circle in moral reasoning would thus be completed, and the egoism of the allied body would be brought back upon itself. A corporation cannot be trusted to seek the real good of any but those whom it comprises, yet, if these are all mankind, the end of the highest morality is attained. From this truth, then, that the highest moral purpose to which a combination can be put is to seek the material and moral welfare of its own members—a purpose which may be attended with the most beneficial results—and that the attempt to influence for good those beyond its own circle is in one way or another rendered fruitless, we may learn that there is a limit to the good which may be derived from this phenomenon. Its chief value being to divert violent egoism, where that egoism has ceased to exist in a marked form its use is no longer needed, and only its evil tends to remain. Hence a return to individualism is the necessary condition of further progress; individual effort alone can lead morality beyond a certain point, and all that remains is to confirm abstract principle, and to seek to remove those conditions which necessitate the antagonism of men rather than their alliance.

From this examination of the relations of men to one another, and the effect of such relations upon conduct, we are enabled to formulate the following result:—that

the mainspring of individual action under any but abnormally quiescent conditions or ideal conditions which are rarely realized, is antagonism ; that, however disguised and kept under by the repressive enactments of law, this individual antagonism tends to reappear in its most disastrous form when restraint is removed and the impulse to selfishness strong, and that this individual antagonism, as will be more clearly seen after the examination of economic morality, holds throughout all the conditions of that active life by which men earn their livelihood. Further, that this antagonism is increased in the case of every individual by the spectacle of similar antagonism in others ; and upon individual motives of self-defence, since one man's gain is to a large extent another man's loss, he is compelled to enter on a course of selfish striving. As a remedy for this state of things, combination is no longer found to possess its earlier evolutionary value ; for, having become in a measure artificial, and its beneficial influence being restricted to those comprehended within its own limits, it results either in the selfish antagonism of such bodies, or in the fruitless attempt to benefit those who only ask to be allowed to benefit themselves. The failure of such attempts is due to the fact that when the interests of men are separated no real good can be effected by even the most generous aid of one section to another. If the world cannot be entirely at peace with itself, yet within separate nations it is not chimerical to hope that by measures tending to identify the interests of all, individual antagonism might

some day be disarmed without the aid of subordinate rival factions. For what real need is there for division into opposing camps in the political world, or for the desperate rush of individual selfishness which tends to ruin all in the economic world ?

As to the direction in which improvement may be expected, if it has been shown that the average man is at the mercy of his moral surroundings, yet those surroundings are capable of modification, and the influence of man upon man which may act for evil may also act for good. Accordingly we may count for advance not only upon the intellectual element in morality, but upon such changes in individual relations as will identify the interests of each with the interests of all. The insistence on rights and duties, and so forth, though necessary continuously in education, has long produced the utmost it can ever be made to produce in the voluntary attitude of man to man. For though it is well never to lose sight of the fact that morality is a matter of self-adjustment, yet unless the facilities for this self-adjustment are secured the enunciation of such precepts will have but a limited effect. Men act as they see others acting around them, and are compelled to fight in sheer self-defence. And this seems to show that if advance is to take place it must be general, and that beyond a certain point moral progress without social readjustment is impossible.

CHAPTER XIII.

ECONOMIC MORALITY.

IN attempting to offer an explanation of phenomena so complex as those presented by the moral side of economic relations, the danger is that too simple an explanation may be presented as adequate. For in problems of this nature, what philosophers frequently pride themselves upon as simplicity of solution is in reality mere weakness of generalization. Again, in attempting to avoid this fault there may be a risk of falling into the opposite error of multiplying causes, which has been denounced by a great authority * as the prevalent disease of philosophic speculation in his time. Notwithstanding the fear of such a time-honoured indictment, it seems certain that there are, tending to lower the morality of commercial relations, not less than four distinct causes, which may be formulated as follows :—

I. That the antagonism of individuals or combinations is increased by the consciousness that others are similarly striving, and that therefore immoral action is necessary for the purpose of mere self-defence.

* Francis Bacon.

2. That morality is lowered in proportion to the strength of the temptation.

3. That the claims of self and family, as against the rest of the world, are paramount.

4. That in commercial transactions men move in a world of more general and abstract relations, and the wrong done is thus less vividly realized, and more easily disregarded, than in the concrete relations of private life.

1. In physical association, as we have already seen, it is the fear of death which, in cases of panic, disintegrates the mass, and drives men from feelings of comparative sympathy into acts of cowardly brutality. In ideal association—that is, in the ordinary world of individual enterprise—a similar result is brought about by that impulse which ranks next to the fear of death in its overmastering selfishness, the love of money. Factory laws, Acts relative to the frauds of trustees, Plimsoll regulations, fraudulent bankruptcy Acts, and a crowd of similar enactments, remain on our statute-books as evidence of the fearful length to which men are hurried by this motive, which has the effect of completely severing the ideal bond between man and man, and of converting humanity into a cruel striving mass of individual selfishness. One of the strongest inducements to set aside the precepts of the average moral code in the race for wealth, is the result of that idea of fellowship in wrong-doing which introduces such intensity into individual antagonism. It has been already shown that when there is any vivid appeal to the instinct of selfish fear or

cupidity in the individual, the fact that others are seen to be similarly actuated impels each person, as by a kind of contemptible rivalry, to a lower course of action than his general character would warrant. In ideal association a motive is present, not so impulsive as that which, in moments of panic for instance, takes possession of a crowd, but equally constraining in the great generality of cases, and compensating for the absence of momentary intensity by a steadiness and persistency which is increased rather than diminished by lapse of time. This motive, the desire for wealth, concentrates a man upon himself, and acts with such force as to weaken in advance the pressure of prohibitive moral considerations. There is only wanted the idea of fellowship—the idea, that is, that all are similarly occupied—to turn that predisposition into a determination to disregard any scruple that may tend contrary to personal advantage. The licence which each man sees others taking he naturally claims for himself, and thus by a tacit understanding another code of morals is substituted, reversing the educational precepts of childhood, and substituting for the binding principles of love and consideration for others the disintegrating influence of personal cupidity. And not only is this feeling of association in malpractices generally operative upon the economic world, but the particular power which it possesses of lessening the sense of wrong-doing, which has already been examined, reappears in the ordinary commercial company, and, as in other cases of combi-

nation, the net result of wrong inflicted seems as if it were divided up and distributed among the individuals composing the company.

2. The second reason here assigned as tending to produce a low commercial morality, the strength of the temptation, is sometimes assigned as the only cause. Mr. Sidgwick, in his "Method of Ethics" (2nd edit. p. 154), speaking of divergences from the ordinary moral code in commercial dealings, says, "In such cases there are generally strong natural inducements to disobey the stricter code; in fact, it would seem that it is to the continual pressure of these inducements that the relaxation of the rule has been due." Certainly, that morality is lowered in proportion to the strength of the temptation may be taken as an axiom, though the proposition is sometimes denied, on the ground that small thefts are more frequent than large thefts, or, rather, that the majority of men would more readily commit a small theft than a large theft, should the alternatives occur to them. If this be true, the reason for it certainly is that the risk of detection and fear of consequences are, in the case of the more sweeping transaction, enormously increased. But the self-evidence of the proposition that morality tends to be lowered in proportion to the strength of the temptation, lies in the fact that the statement of it implies no greater risk in the case of a large theft than in the case of a small one. Granted that a clerk would rather pocket a stray sovereign than commit a large embezzlement, the reason in nine cases out of ten would

be that the consequences of detection in the one case would be infinitely less than in the other. Suppose the same clerk to be placed in such circumstances that the stroke of a pen would secure him wealth sufficient for a lifetime with as little fear of being brought to account as for the abstraction of a shilling, and it follows that the strain upon his moral principle would be fearfully increased. When we add to this the fact that such an act, if for a sufficiently large reward, would be leniently regarded by the world, and that similar cases are on record, and that the clerk was aware of these facts, then the committal of the crime becomes more and more of a certainty. Or if we take a less crude and naked illustration, and make the act one that is not punishable by law, though equally heinous from an abstract point of view, then its committal in the ordinary way of business becomes an absolute certainty.

In favour of the opposite view, however, it must be admitted that there is a type of character which would commit a small sin while shrinking from a larger, from a secret conviction that the greater was the gain the greater would be the wrong done to the world, and the greater the burden on their conscience. But such are not the types that rule the world of commerce.

Cynical as it may sound, there are few departments of life in which greatness does not, at one time or another, mean a certain absence of conscience. Especially is this the case in commerce, and there is no doubt that, in competitive business circles, to have scruples in

proportion to the magnitude of the possible gain would be regarded as little short of simple folly. The commercial world is led by what would be termed the daring, and not the timid type; and the latter, though an individual fact, is not the model on which the rising commercialist is framed, nor of sufficient prominence to be taken into account in any general statement about the morality of trade. As the young grow up to find that the moral truths which they have been taught are in a sense fictitious, and that no real regard is paid to anything but wealth, if they are thrown among the ordinary rush, they are without the ability, even if they possess the inclination, to stem to their own certain detriment, the current of self-seeking.

3. There is, however, frequently a more redeeming feature than pure selfishness in the motives which prompt to dishonest dealing. Yet, except from an evolutionary point of view, it is without much moral value. It is simply the consideration that in the dishonesty of many there is an unselfish element, in so far as their conduct is prompted by the wish to provide for the wants of a family. It has been pointed out that the family is the first natural combination that appears in the history of moral evolution, and it would seem that even in highly civilized times the family is the only sphere in which it is demanded that an individual should preserve intact the ordinary moral code. In all other departments of life—in professions, in trade, in politics, in international relations—we descend to a lower level.

The family is the one sphere undisturbed by those emotions which are powerful to influence conduct to wrong action. The various forms of antagonism which disturb morality are here, in a measure, kept at a distance. In practice, though not in theory, the world is regarded as a species of legitimate prey for the individual, not only in the interests of the family combination, but for himself, provided the contest is carried on by the test of intellectual survival.

It has been already sufficiently shown how this crude but perfectly correct theory of human relations is cut in upon by arrangements tending to mitigate its severity. It remains an actual fact with regard to nations; with regard to individuals the struggle is relegated to certain quarters in which the main prizes of life are contended for. Here there is a certain concession to the antagonistic nature, a recognized sphere where the struggle between man and man is fought out. As a nation advances in civilization, nowhere is this more conspicuous than in the various forms of commerce, in the production and distribution of commodities whereby the greater portion of the community gain their living. In family life, and in that intercourse of family with family which constitutes what is called private life, the struggle is by common consent suspended. The different departments of ethics are found in practice to be widely separated, and in the particular instance of trade and commerce this fact of the gross contradiction between the private life and the commercial dealings of the great

generality of men is so obvious as to form a frequent theme for denunciation. This, however, does not alter the fact, for the conditions are beyond the reach of mere reproof. Though the ramifications of private and commercial life apparently cross each other at every turn, yet by virtue of that distinction which is drawn between one department of life and another, they are in reality kept curiously separated. For though a man may sit at table with his commercial victims, yet the different moral category in which his acts are mentally placed serve to keep his present and past conduct perfectly distinct, while mental association with the rest of the world gives that assurance of fellowship which in most minds is almost the equivalent of absolute rectitude of conduct.

4. The fourth assignable cause for the lowness of commercial morality is perhaps the most instructive of all in its bearing on any theories which regard morality, as generally practised, as obedience to abstract principle. It is well known that our effective sympathy with distress is in proportion to the force of the mental presentation, and is at its height when the effects of suffering are actually before our eyes. The simplest method of escaping the discomfort of a sympathy which is denied the satisfaction of giving effective relief, a method to which all in such circumstances habitually resort, is simply to withdraw from the sight of misery. To witness suffering which we cannot alleviate is productive of intense mental pain ; and if to withdraw is to

obtain relief, this proves that mental is less forcible than actual presentation. Similarly in morals, when there is a strong inducement to pursue a dishonest course, if the evil it may entail is not within the range of immediate observation, that evil may be excluded with comparative ease from taking hold upon the imagination. Where the relations of cause and effect in morality are before the eyes, the shrinking from a wrongful course is more emphatic than where the effect is less faintly realized. Now, curious as it may seem, if the person on whom wrong will fall is a single, distinctly realizable individual, there is, on psychological grounds, a better chance that the restraint of conscience will be effective than when the persons injured are many. For in the latter case it is probable that many of the persons will be unknown; and if this is not necessarily so, it is at least certain that their number, instead of increasing the difficulty of wronging them by showing that the effect will be multiplied, actually diminishes it by showing that the effect will be divided, and consequently proportionately less felt by each individual. For in economic phenomena a combination or company takes the form of an abstraction, and thereby actually seems to evoke towards itself a lowered morality.

A commercial company is not an object calculated to excite a vivid compassion if injured. When such a body inflicts wrong, the sense of guilt appears to be divided; conversely, when wrong is inflicted upon a combined body, the idea that the injury will be dis-

tributed over a certain number of individuals dulls the mental presentation made by the mind of the wrong-doer, and blunts his conscience. He pictures the wrong done, not as resting on a single realizable person, but as distributed over a greater or less number.

The most simple case that can be taken in illustration of this phenomenon is that of the holiday excursionist by rail, who either escapes payment of a ticket, or in any other way defrauds the company. There are very few who would regard this act as equally reprehensible with the act of literally abstracting the same amount, yet in one and the other case the effect is precisely the same, and the only difference that appears is in the person or persons from whom the due amount is withheld. Other considerations, such as the knowledge that the same thing is frequently done by others may enter here; but there can be little doubt that the mental facility with which the evasion is effected is mainly due to the causes described. But the obligation to a trained moral instinct is in both cases exactly the same.

The whole region of economic morality, though here but cursorily discussed, is full of the deepest suggestion, not only as to the actual facts and principles of human nature, but as to the conditions which are politically essential for social and moral progress. At some of these it will be not uninformative to glance.

The evident corollary from the theory of the three forms of survival is that the first and second forms of survival are pernicious unless the use of physical and

intellectual means for prosecuting private ends is checked by moral considerations. For the purposes of morality, no title to self-assertion can be allowed which does not base at least part of its claims on good done to others. Now, though this element is largely secured in economic relations on account of the economic interdependence of men, which lays men under the necessity of supplying the wants of others when they supply their own, yet there is ample room left for the unchecked exercise of the most selfish forms of individual antagonism.

Morality is, indeed, here already, to a certain extent, self-supporting, from the regard which society has for its own interests. For here, as in the improvement of all rudimentary morality, it is by pressure from without rather than by principle from within that change for the better must be expected. As society becomes better organized, it imposes greater and greater restriction on the amount of selfish good that can be derived from a disregard of the ordinary moral code. Though commercial frauds are a byword, yet there is a certain advantage in a reputation for commercial honesty. Many forms of commercial dishonesty, if detected, are punishable by law, and bring loss of respect and consequent loss of custom, while honesty has the opposite effect. Yet, if closely examined, this business morality has a much less rigid signification than might be supposed, and means abstention from flagrant immorality rather than a refusal to take advantage of the ordinary tricks and impostures considered admissible in trade ;

while if such scrupulous conduct on the part of one individual involve the pecuniary loss of other individuals commercially related, it is by such interested persons summarily and contemptuously condemned. Whatever improvement is to be effected in the nature of individuals themselves must be by appeal to the lower motives of self-interest, by an adjustment of social opinion calculated to inflict severer penalties than are at present inflicted on dishonesty.

Yet the difficulty in the way of obtaining this increased social pressure is that society individually hopes to benefit by those forms of dishonesty which it is called upon socially to repress. Here, as elsewhere in the regions of antagonism, before respect for the individuality of others is present, either as enforced by law or as the growth of individual consciousness, success is the measure of worth ; and the instances of large fortunes here and there continually before the eyes, and the universal respect paid to those who, by whatever means, have amassed them, are a perpetual inducement to others not to let moral considerations lightly stand in the way of personal advancement, since success means practical immunity.

By the principle of association in wrong-doing, each claims the right to a similar course of action, and not unnaturally shrinks from rigorously denouncing in others principles which are in effect his own. And thus society not only condones economic robbery, but allows its sanction to set strongly in favour and to the manifest

encouragement of those forms of greatness which are won at the expense of moral considerations. In short, the general moral sensibility of the individual is, from the causes which have already been pointed out, insufficiently advanced to estimate the real gravity of the evil.

Turning to another possible quarter from which improvement might be expected, it would at first seem, from the analogy of the repression of physical violence, that much good might be effected by repressive legislation. But, in the first place, there is the same difficulty in setting in motion the machinery of the law as there is in evoking a stricter social censure. A national assembly is largely composed of men who owe their position to success achieved under the present laxity of economic morality, or who have been sent there by those who are likely to resent any interference with that system of things to which they owe their importance. When political representation is poisoned in its source, which is the individual character of a people, it cannot be expected that the legislature itself will be altogether free from taint.

Yet, notwithstanding these difficulties, attempts have been made to cope with the graver forms of economic wrong. But there is this fresh obstacle to be encountered, namely, that the injustice inflicted by forms of intellectual antagonism is much less easily grappled with than grosser forms of bodily injury. Repressive legislation is not only difficult to set in motion and easily evaded, but has besides a reactive effect prejudicial to

commercial enterprise, which is at once seized upon by interested persons as a pretext for preventing the introduction of reform.

From legislative enactments, then, and the pressure of social opinion, but a tardy reform can be expected. Yet for the present it is the best that can be offered. For any effective improvement could only be brought about by the removal of the causes of immorality pointed out in the present chapter ; in other words, by a change in human nature. We have seen that where men are physically associated, cruel individual antagonism may be caused by the fear of death. Remove that fear of death, convince a struggling crowd that there is no cause for alarm, or threaten them with a more immediate fear, and the antagonistic effort ceases.

Therefore, it is open to any one to argue, with regard to disastrous economic selfishness, that if the influence which precludes the possibility of real union and sets man against man, namely, the love of wealth, or, to make the parallel complete, the fear of poverty, were to be removed, or if a more immediate fear were to be threatened, one great cause which disintegrates mankind would also disappear.

But the cases, in reality, are hardly parallel. To quell a panic there is needed merely a positive assurance as to a question of fact, that there is no cause for alarm, or, more simply still, a threat which takes instantaneous effect. Such a threat for the economic world could only be legal, and both the impossibility of procuring such

a threat, and the certainty of its failure if procured, we have already seen. And as to the other method of quelling the cause for alarm, nothing will quell the cause for the alarm of poverty—not even a radical change in social and economic conditions ; for the fear of poverty, though the only logical reason that can be assigned for a life of selfish striving, is not the reason for such striving, but merely the pretext. Even if, by a change in economic conditions which secured every one a fair share of the wealth of the world, the alarm of poverty were removed, yet the mainspring of economic inequality, the love of wealth, would not be removed. The fear of poverty and the love of wealth are not synonymous terms ; for the love of wealth is, after all, but a form of the love of power, a mere phase of individual antagonism, and no mere change of external arrangement could root out the antagonism of individuals and its intellectual offspring, the love of power.

It is not until such antagonism has entered more certainly upon its final phase—that of moral survival—that any real amelioration or enduring change can be looked for. This presumption is verified by all we know of the working of the proposed economic changes. All experiments in co-operation, or any forms of economic equality, testify to the present impossibility of preventing the consciousness of intellectual superiority from making itself felt in certain individuals, to the prejudice of the enterprise and the detriment of those concerned. For men will apparently accept the gospel

of fraternity and equality so far as is necessary to bring down those who are accidentally above them within the reach of competition, or so far as is necessary to prevent those around them from getting a better start. But they ignore the fact that, under the new *régime*, they are logically and morally bound to restrain such exercise of their individual capacity as will place them above their fellows. Accordingly, the forces of the world, which have been momentarily restrained while a fresh start is being effected, resume their course, and inequality in a different form sets in once more. Liberty, fraternity, and equality are well enough ; but the real truth is that it is Nature's handicap, and not man's, that is unfair, and that men are here and there born of such capacity that they necessarily overpower the rest, and these must be shackled if the dead level is to be maintained. But where, then, is the principle of liberty as originally conceived ?

The brilliant dreams of the leaders of the French and American revolutions have dissolved and left not a wrack behind of all their bright anticipations ; for individual liberty means individual antagonism which produces in its turn political or economic tyranny. For whether it be true or no that individual antagonism produced that tyranny back to which non-artificial political control must be ascribed, even if we cannot reason from this analogy, it appears beyond question that it produces in the region of economics that deplorable conflict between labour and capital which has the effect

of keeping a large portion of the world upon the perpetual verge of starvation. Yet how to attack this evil? For love of wealth is love of power, the effect of individual antagonism. To seize upon and prohibit one form of the outward manifestation of this love of power, since it would be to grapple with the effect alone and leave the cause untouched, could only have one of two results. It would either merely change the direction of this antisocial impulse, and turn it into new and possibly not less pernicious forms; or, if it had the unexpected result of entirely correcting the injurious antagonism of men, it would also have the effect of removing one of the most important incentives to individual enterprise and social progress.

Granting that in the course which the race for wealth, if entirely uncorrected, is likely to take, there is cause for grave alarm, yet it is no less certain that under present conditions of human nature, if this goal and end of average natures were closed, the depressing effect on the whole range of human activity would not be without its serious aspect. For if the pursuit of wealth is a relatively low pursuit, it is by no means the lowest of which human nature is capable. Without the dazzling prospect of wealth, there can be little doubt that much individual energy would sink back to lower pursuits, or remain altogether unevoked. And though it can by no means be argued that the present struggle for wealth, with all its evil and injustice, is a necessary training for industry, yet to attempt hastily to root out the evil

would be blindly to root out the good as well, not only without the certainty of replacing it by better, but at the imminent risk of introducing worse.

There is, besides, still another principle in human nature more trivial than the love of power, yet equally with it an outcome of antagonism, and of which equal account must be taken in any schemes for social and economic reform. There is, indeed, a large class who, from conditions wholly beyond their control, are forced to live continually in a gloomy and hopeless poverty. That every effort should be made to understand the conditions which at present necessitate this state of things, and, when that is done, that every effort should be made to remove them, the most elementary principles of human justice demand. Yet, excepting the conflict between labour and capital, that large part of the unhappiness of the world, which is usually assigned as the result of the unequal distribution of wealth, is in reality no such thing, but is, along with the unequal distribution of wealth, a joint effect of a third phenomenon—the desire of every individual to possess what others have not. Just as morality consists in certain equitable relations of human beings with one another, and has no real meaning out of such relations, so happiness of any sort depends upon the presence, actual or ideal, of human beings, and does not consist in possession of the world's goods alone. The happiness to be extracted from such possession is a compound feeling, made up of possession on the one hand, and the position with regard to other

human beings given by that possession on the other. It is obvious almost at a glance, even if it had not long been the theme of satirists and philosophers, that a large portion of the honours and enjoyments coveted by the world are intrinsically worthless, and the persistence with which, though worthless, they have been continually pursued it has at all times taxed the ingenuity of the human observer to explain. There is apparently, however, one constant element in certain forms of all human enjoyment, and one which, on a general survey, seems to rank far higher than the intrinsic merit of the envied objects—namely, the pleasure of exclusive possession.

It is from the power which they possess of ministering to the demands of this selfish law of the human mind that the real attraction which riches possess for the average mind is derived, and not, as is habitually asserted, and very generally believed, from the material comforts which they bestow. The savage with his extra gewgaw is not only relatively, but positively, as happy as the merchant prince with his extra million.

Even from so simple a matter as the vagaries of taste this law of the human mind can be proved.

Our senses are the only proof we have of the outer world, and the sense of taste apparently not more unreliable than any of the others; yet nothing is more certain than that, in matters within its own cognizance, it has habitually allowed itself to be grossly deceived. The rarity of delicacies and the difficulty of procuring them, and not the actual pleasure communicated to the

palate, has in all ages been the most important element in determining the zest with which they have been sought. Not even the most practised gourmand in any age has been able to escape from the influences of the purely intellectual law whereby an added and a fictitious value is set upon that which, having happened to catch the fancy, from its rarity gives those who are enabled to enjoy it a trivial advantage over those who cannot. If, then, this sense can be so duped, so can any other ; and where exclusive possession is likely to confer a value upon an object, it is unsafe to argue that the general distribution of such objects will secure general happiness. If wealth were distributed out to-morrow, and measures taken to prevent its unequal accumulation, mankind would be no nearer the desired goal. For the bitter envy and antagonism of human nature would not necessarily disappear as well, and, if robbed of the old battle-ground, would surely find a new. The same law which sets a fictitious value on the caprices of the taste will be found to hold good in all matters of human desire. The greatest merit which an object can possess in the eyes of its possessor may be, firstly, its use ; but is, secondly, and more universally even, the admiration which its comparatively exclusive possession will entail. If, then, this law apply to wealth, it follows that much of its value, being relative, would disappear if it were distributed, and the world would still be left face to face with the real problem of unsatisfied human desire. From the study of this principle we may gather a yet further

lesson. If to possess what others have not confers a pleasure, it is mainly because of the existence of a corresponding envy. If the supposed injury caused by the unequal distribution of wealth were removed, it is but natural to expect that this envy of exclusive possession would take some other form, and would formulate imaginary grievances in order to dislodge some other portion of mankind from some other distinctive position which yet entailed no real hurt. Therefore, with this possible motive in view, in any schemes of sweeping social and economic reform the world must be assured that it is a real intelligent love of mankind, and a real sense of injury done rather than mere envy of exclusive possession, which prompts the change. It might, indeed, be urged that, even if no real injury is done, there is in the enjoyment of a fictitious pleasure by one half of mankind a wrong done to the other half. Such a position, however, would be somewhat forced. To draw such a distinction would be indicative of a state of mind which would render economic reform useless. If the caprice of human nature which objects to the exclusive possession of a fictitious pleasure by others remain uncorrected, it will be in vain to secure any form of economic equality.

If there is any truth whatever in the main contention of this work, it can only be by proper direction and amendment of the spirit of antagonism that the happiness of a people can be brought about. Happiness as at present sought is for a whole people an impossibility

and a chimera, since by far the largest element in such happiness is either the love of power or the desire for the more trivial advantage which has been discussed. Both these pleasures necessarily disappear by common participation, for, depending largely on the discomfiture of others, they cannot be shared. If such a disposition remained unaltered, as there is every reason to believe that it would, wealth might be equalized, and every man's opportunity of enjoyment might be doubled, and yet real happiness might not be secured ; and, what is more, the tendency to return to the old state of things would not be removed. For there is no magic charm about state-adjustment to curb the envious inclinations of man or to still the restless cravings of human appetite.

CHAPTER XIV.

POLITICAL MORALITY.

POLITICAL parties may be regarded as due to the operation, within the limits of a single people, of the same law of combination which divides and keeps mankind in antagonistic national sections. It is the central power alone which restrains them both from becoming in all degrees as hostile as contending nations.

The phenomenon of revolution is the phenomenon of political strife breaking out into the only means of deciding contrary views, that of violence, when the central power has become too weak to enforce a peaceable decision. Those combinations whose antagonism was before mainly that of idea, and conducted with intellectual weapons, become physical and resort to force. Though in history there may occasionally be seen the contest between two incompatible ideas fought out in bitter earnest by contending political parties, such, for instance, as that between kingship and republicanism in their original acceptation, when the great question at issue is whether the government shall exist for the sake of the people, or the people for the sake of the govern-

ment, yet the majority of questions pending between political parties are in themselves too insignificant to be burdened with the entire responsibility of the antagonism they apparently cause. Though in civilized times the separation primarily takes place upon a difference of idea, it reverts to the main question at issue throughout the history of the world, whether between individual or combination—namely, the question with whom lies the superior power. The supposed question at issue is in reality the effect of the rivalry of combinations, and not the cause of that rivalry.

So notorious is low morality in politics that, relinquishing any hope of proving it to be otherwise, men have occasionally set themselves to the task of discovering whether the malpractices in politics are not morally defensible as their appearance is an inevitable and constant quantity. In criticizing political morality, however, the evolutionary history and meaning of combination must be kept in mind, and the system not hastily stigmatized as vicious. Yet such an inclination on the part of the observer is stronger in criticizing politics than any other branch of moral phenomena ; such is the pretension to complacent infallibility which marks the average politician. Sufficiently prominent in all individuals with regard to ordinary affairs, this dogmatic tendency reaches an extraordinary pitch when the convictions in question are common to large numbers. After what has been said upon the effect of combination in lessening a sense of wrong, conversely its effect may easily be understood

in increasing the sentiment of self-complacency, each individual drawing assurance from the fact that his convictions are largely supported.

There is, however, an evil infinitely more serious with which politicians may be taxed. One of the first requisites of a higher morality is the belief in the presumptive purity of the motives of others, especially where such belief does not involve any grievous personal damage if unfounded. But the reckless ascription, not only of the most absurd errors of calculation, but of the basest personal motives, to members of an opposing party, is the main feature in politics, and that not only by those who are otherwise intellectually contemptible, but also by those from whom, in other departments of life, we would naturally look for honest and unbiased judgment. And so uncompromising is the attitude of rival politicians that the few who wish to keep aloof from a degrading system of vituperation are regarded with distrust as time-servers, or with contempt as wanting in the strength of mind requisite for political conviction. Yet it is unphilosophical to condemn in the individual what is the result of his environment, and of the moral composition in which he plays the part merely of a unit. Nor is the lesson to be forgotten which is conveyed in the story of the enactment of Solon, condemning those forthwith who refused to side with either party in a revolution. For though the fear of tyranny, against which this measure was directed, is not at present in any way formidable, yet

under present conditions, were the majority to hold aloof from political action in consequence of a too clear insight into the shortcomings of political method, the result would necessarily be a speedy enfeeblement of national life. What is really to be feared, and what has frequently caused the downfall of states, is the irrational element introduced into what should be sober discussion by the undue prominence of the otherwise natural antagonism of parties. As has been pointed out, the self-sacrifice of combinations is unknown, but it might at least be expected that the general good of the state might form a larger portion, not of the creed, for that is full enough of profession, but of the practice of political parties.

But, again, the moral phenomena of politics are further complicated by the introduction of another of those factors in moral evolution, the necessity of which, like that of combination, has, from the individual point of view, been outgrown. Political parties, resembling nations in their mutual attitudes in many other respects, resemble them also in this—that they are dependent upon leadership, and are therefore called upon continually to surrender their personal initiative and private convictions. This surrender, like the submission of followers to a feudal chieftain, is for the most part unconscious and unquestioned. As it does not occur to the followers of a feudal chief that they have any wrongs to be avenged, or that there is anything in the justice of their position which an approaching democratic age may question, so it does not occur to the rank

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and file of political following that they have a right to their own judgment, especially where it comes in conflict with the principles of their leader. Hence the great question of the day in politics, How far is the surrender of private judgment in the interests of preserving political combination to be carried? From the evolutionary point of view, the difficulty arises from the double function that an individual exercises, firstly, as an individual, and, secondly, as the unit in a combination. But for the most part, this difficulty is only occasional, from the facility with which new and possibly contradictory ideas, having once been authorized by those in command, are quickly disseminated throughout the whole political party, and adopted without apparent effort by those to whom the arguments on which they are founded would, without the stamp of authority, be meaningless or vicious. Thus it is that we see projects of reform, for which the same arguments have been to hand with equal abstract force for a hundred years previously, suddenly embraced by one-half of the community with a moral fervour which would raise to a glowing pitch our opinion of the attachment of the reformers to the principles of justice, humanity, and equity, did we not know that the causes for such an outburst have existed for years politically unnoticed, and that so suddenly as the storm and the cry unto heaven has arisen at the call of leading politicians, so suddenly will it also go down.

In such cases we are, in fact, witnessing part of the phenomena of ideal combination. The party cry may

indeed be founded on principles of justice and humanity ; it may indeed rise above the level of a party cry, and be due to the honest, unselfish conviction of its propounders ; but its fervent acceptance by the rest of the combination is, in a measure, fictitious, and due, not to a clear perception by each individual of the merits of the case, but to the permeability of the combination by any given idea, fair sounding and promulgated with sufficient emphasis. Fervour of conviction, as we have had reason to conclude, is a matter of numbers, and the rapid permeability of a body of men by a single and totally new idea a property of moral composition. And when, further, it is remembered that political combination is at once physical and ideal, the rapid dissemination of an idea with a fervour beyond the real conviction of the individual, and sometimes in striking contrast to his previous mental history, is easily explained.

The causes which range the members of a single united nation into opposite factions in the prosecution of a common end are, as has been said, similar to those which maintain the many divisions of the human species. But when we have said that it is difference of opinion and sentiment which causes political divisions, we have by no means fully explained the matter. If it were not that we were habitually familiar with the phenomenon in history, what *a priori* reason exists for supposing that a nation, whose aims as a nation must be comparatively simple, should divide itself into two or more parties, for the avowed purpose of mutually thwarting

one another in the attainment of the given end. Admitting that there is a difference in theory between the Conservative and Liberal policies which has found a place in some form or another in every country in history, yet in practice this difference is greatly modified by the natural inability of national affairs to proceed wholly in the one course or the other. Conservatives, even if wholly left to themselves, must initiate new measures or countenance new adaptations; Liberals must take the old as a basis for the new. But further, by far the greater majority of questions over which the strife is fierce are, from the point of view of constitutional theory, wholly colourless, and might be, nay are, proposed indifferently by the one party or the other. But, granting that the opposite sides are arranged on a distinction of theory, if it is merely distinction of theory which causes the opposition, then, as no man is mentally or morally framed precisely like any other—there is no reason why there should not be as many political parties as there are differences of private opinion. It is obviously only a general resemblance of opinion that draws men together in opposing sections; the causes which bind them must be different. The aggregation and cohesion of human atoms takes place by virtue of some other law of affinity by which human units are attracted to a human centre when once formed. The formation of a street crowd is a simple illustration of the principle of combination, and it is the same principle, assimilating minds and generating a

supposed affinity of idea, which forms political parties. The mental assimilation is the effect of combination, and not the cause of it; is the result of a desire to be in harmony with a certain number of fellow-creatures rather than the outcome of private conviction.

The presence of political parties is the result of a certain need of antagonism implanted by evolution in the human mind. All heroism takes the form of some danger to be confronted, of some enemy to be vanquished in the name of human welfare. Singly or in combination, man demands some real or imaginary foe to call forth his highest energies, and parties are ranged against one another from an instinctive obedience to this impulse. When this combination has been formed, the members of each opposing side are under the necessity of believing their opponents to be utterly at fault both in aim and method. The phenomenon of natural self-deception as to the righteousness of a nation's cause is repeated in a modified form in politics. As antagonism is needed to call forth the highest forms of energy, so the assumption of a righteous cause is necessary to evoke the highest forms of antagonism.

Accordingly, such is the force of the primitive instinct, joined with the demands of a later morality, that rather than forego the struggle on the ground that there is no real cause for quarrel, the alternative is adopted of believing, contrary to all rational anticipation, that there is the gravest evil to be encountered, and that the very existence of the nation is being endangered by the

nefarious measures of the opposite party. To meet and combat these designs becomes one of the highest aims of existence, and take the precedence in many cases even of the higher claims of country. As one of the recognized spheres of personal ambition, it is not unnatural that politics should bear the traces of the disturbing influence of individual passion, and possibly it is to this cause that the bitterness of political contest is partly attributable. For where leadership and prominence has been the object, it has been from time immemorial the policy of a defeated aspirant to institute a rival party. Yet if human nature has progressed so little as to render every single man who rises to political prominence open to the real suspicion of bartering the interests of his country for his mere personal ambition, as every opposition would have us believe, then the outlook for mankind is blank indeed. But the very recklessness and universality of such charges is the best proof of their general worthlessness, and of the belief that they are merely the result of a heated political imagination. But they are none the less on that account to be deplored. It remains for the experience of future ages to discover whether the work of government can be carried on without the wear and tear of antagonistic friction, and the debasing suspicions as to the moral soundness of large masses of fellow-creatures which the present political system engenders. Apart from the evolutionary necessity of submitting to such a system, the only positive gain is a possibly more exhaustive

inquiry into the nature of all governmental proposals ; yet even here the good is but partial, owing to the absence of any competent judicial faculty for deciding between the contending parties. It is a questionable advantage to morality, though under present circumstances it may be a necessary means of elucidating truth, that the opponents in a judicial suit should impute to each other motives and actions as base and infamous as the nature of the case will allow. Yet at least there is here an impartial judge who adjusts eventually the balance of the case, and whose office it is to remove the unnecessary stains with which the opponents have besmeared one another. In politics there is no such impartial auditor, not even an impartial public. For when it is the divided nation that contends with itself, who shall hold the balance? The slanderous charges mutually imputed remain unremoved, and were it not that the more intelligent portion of the public is half conscious of the violent exaggeration, were it not also that political feeling does not necessarily enter into the relations of private life, the rational attitude of men to one another would be seriously and permanently disturbed. As it is, the moral damage is no light one, especially seeing that by far the greater portion of the community imbibe the bitterest political prejudices in their youth, imparted by their parents with almost as little hesitation as the most fundamental moral precepts. At times, in the conflict of distorted opinion, there arises a solitary politician who dares to advocate the

course most consistent with honour, and by the charm of perfect honesty holds his hearers, disarms the antagonism of parties, and evokes the better reason of the political world. But the warp of political opinion, momentarily unbent, returns to its habitual position, and the political career of the man who has dared to forsake party and adhere to the right, is apt to become from that moment precarious. From cases such as these it is not difficult to estimate the gulf that separates the normal course of politics from anything like a perfect integrity.

With whatever of moral enthusiasm a young patriot may enter the service of his country, it would require a courage and singleness of heart more than human to hold to his course throughout with perfect singleness of purpose. So long as he held himself aloof and absolutely refused a compromise between his rigid honesty and political necessity, so long would he find himself not only without assistance, but suspect. Assistance must be bought at the current price, generally that of mutual aid in procuring a selfish end. The man who would refuse such aid on moral grounds not only incurs the proverbial obloquy consequent on refusing a mean request, but is by his presence for ever after a silent reproach to men of lower aims. Such political Quixotism, if it ever existed, is speedily crushed out, and leaves behind what are called the practical aims of a sensible man of business, or the thirst for power and schemes of private advancement—a not

infrequent or unnatural result when enthusiastic natures at length become aware that the environment is too strong to be broken down, and that the attempted introduction of higher aims is doomed to be fruitless.

In this waste of enthusiasm, and inability of pure and single-minded integrity to make itself heard above the noise of political strife, there is much that is deeply saddening. Yet the fault lies, not in the fact that there is anything degrading in the nature of politics as such, but in the individual disposition of every single political unit. That men should not be able to conduct affairs touching their deepest interests in other than a spirit of the bitterest hostility, is a matter for regret ; but that they should find in politics an outlet for a spirit of antagonism which at least stops short of final acts of violence is, perhaps, a matter for congratulation. As a nation grows and individuals increase in numbers, their private interests become too diversified to be held together by the national principle alone. To foster the spirit of close interdependence which is as the life-breath of morality, other binding ties and principles are needed. And thus the mutual hatred and injustice of political parties must be regarded as the price paid for the morally valuable community of interests within those parties.

CHAPTER XV.

CONCLUSION.

THAT the chief difficulty which has beset the course of moral science has been the opposition offered to the causational theory of human actions from a belief in the educational necessity of the doctrine of free-will—that is, from the idea pervading many minds that belief in free-will is a sort of sacred duty—has already been explained. The result of this feeling necessarily is that without a careful study of human actions this portion of nature is to all appearance effectually separated from the rest. Even those who have seen, with the utmost clearness, the absolute necessity of the belief in causation have at the same time been unable to rid themselves of the idea that there is an element even in that causation which they themselves, as it were, supply. What, for instance, comes of that distinction in character which we are wont to characterize as strong and feeble will? Though it may be answered that difference of character was never denied, and that, on the contrary, it forms one of the elements of causation, it has still been felt that there is something left unexplained. And not without reason: for that element which seems to infuse itself into

actions at the bidding of the agent is the instinct of antagonism. Strength of will, if examined closely, is simply found to be power of unwearied persistence; that is, power of unwearied opposition to unfavourable circumstances. It is to this spirit of indomitable persistence or antagonism in various forms, whether directed against external enemies who threaten the existence, or against internal inclinations which threaten to defeat the execution of a settled purpose, that every one has at some time or another been entitled for success. Throughout the organic world, from a spider to a Bruce, this phenomenon can be observed, and is simply an instinct given by evolution in different degrees, the better to equip organisms for the struggle for existence. Because this instinct is most strongly stirred in bold natures just at the time when circumstances threaten most to beat it down, its value as a source of personal strength is both consciously and unconsciously perceived; it is trained to obey the voice of reason, and is invested with a portion of the majesty of the principle which it serves. Without the guidance of this principle it is at all times ready to return to the conditions of its baser origin, and is then spoken of in terms which apply to the element of antagonism when, in its pure and simple form, it is apt to involve its possessor in frequent and useless strife. When strength of will is unnecessary, as in the child, it is discountenanced, and the opposite principle of obedience substituted in its place, until the child is more fully educated in the proper uses to which

it must be put. In other words, the reasoning principle which watches and directs this instinct not being present at an early age, its place is supplied from outside, and the instinct itself, which may break out in dangerous directions, is in such directions discouraged.

With this final word upon the chief difficulty in the way of obtaining a scientific conception of human action, it is necessary to glance at the results obtained from the present inquiry.

It will be seen that the antagonistic theory of morals is enabled to take hold of the perfectionist system with the one hand, and the utilitarian with the other, and in this goodly company is the better prepared to answer questions that may be asked.

The inevitable question, Why should I be moral? rejected at the beginning of the inquiry, is more admissible at the end; for it is legitimately only the educational form of the evolutionary inquiry, Why have men been moral? But if an answer be expected that will suit all times, places, and conditions, it is evident that the main teaching of this inquiry has not been apprehended, for a study of the course of nature shows us that the answer must necessarily be relative. If a man is in that low moral condition in which the heart does not beat in sympathy with noble movements around, if the good which he proposes to himself implies the evil of his fellow-creatures, then he must be made moral by a process suited to his low moral calibre, the fear of bodily pain and harm which will result from a neglect or

defiance of the interests of those with whom he is associated. In other words, if that spirit of activity with which we are gifted persists in seeking an anti-social end, it can only do so in civilized times at the imminent peril of extinction. Again, if the inclination to self-seeking is less gross, the penalty affixed by nature to violations of morality is suited to a higher moral calibre. For to certain minds nothing can be more terrible than the mental pain produced by the consciousness that their act has severed the ideal bond which includes them in the sympathies of mankind.

Such are the penalties or sanctions which attend the indulgence in wrong-doing. But we are not so much concerned with penalties which attend non-performance as with motives which will induce performance. It will be seen that from this point of view also the answer must be relative. For sanctions are the motives of lower natures. As men rise in the moral scale they dispense with the necessity of sanctions which are merely useful to keep them from the commission of wrong, and demand motives which shall raise them from their relatively high morality to a higher still. If it be asked now, not Why should I be moral? but What reason or motive can you bring to bear upon me to make me more moral? the answer is that those who have passed the stage where personal fears are the mainspring of right action are in a moral condition in which motives will necessarily reach them without conscious effort on their own part or on the part of any one else. For if the course of evolution

has so turned and modified the original antagonism of human nature that men find their wishes in harmony with a greater or less portion of mankind, this proves them to be in a state of mind in which they will find not only the greatest pleasure, but the highest exercise of their functions in the service of that portion of mankind. The heart will then vibrate, not only at the thought of the conspicuously great deeds that have been done in the service of humanity, but also at the thought of those silent heroes and heroines of self-denial who, were they known, would form a nobler record than any history has to show.

These can be trusted to go their own way, and motives will throng in upon them with or without their bidding.

As to the man who belongs to neither the one nor the other of these categories, whose "cool self-love" does not respond to motives which imply a disinterested care of his fellow-men, but whose selfishness, on the other hand, is not sufficiently pronounced to conflict openly with the happiness of others, why such a man should not pursue his middle course with decent respectability, adapting his moral standard to the department of life in which from time to time he moves, no sufficient reason can indeed be given. The antagonistic theory of morals can supply him with as good a set of precepts as any other, but equally with those of any other system are they liable to be disregarded. It can tell him that he ought to conform to the requirements of the final stage

of survival, and win admiration by perfecting his bodily, mental, and moral powers in the service of others. It can tell him that he ought to propose to himself a higher aim than the merely relative aim of self-preservation ; that the moral test of every high-minded man is, not who shall save his life, but who shall lose it, if necessary, in leading the vanguard of human progress ; it can tell him that the question he should propose to himself is, not How have I deserved of the section to which I belong, what success have I achieved by the conventional standard of the age in which I live ? but Where should I rank if the muster-roll of the world were called, according to that final standard of merit for which all evolution has been and is preparing ? These and many other "oughts" an evolutionary morality can propose, but it cannot force them upon a man's acceptance. It cannot even prevent the criminal from recklessly seeking his own destruction. And this inability it shares with all high moral and religious theories that have ever been propounded. For appeals which work by love, and not by fear, are unsuited to such natures ; it is by the grosser element of either morality or religion that they must be urged—by fears of present or future punishment, by hopes of present or future reward. It is, once and for all, impossible to find some magic theory which shall have, even logically speaking, the power of turning all within its reach to gold, for the effect of moral and religious theories is relative to the nature on which they play. The strength of religion as an educational instru-

ment is due to the fact that provision is therein made for both the higher and the lower nature, for it alternately wields the principles of love and fear. Moral theories, on the other hand, being bound by the necessity of logical requirements, have been hitherto forced to make a choice between these different principles, and to suffer in consequence of their failure to appeal simultaneously to contradictory types of men. But there is no such real necessity for a scientific morality to confine itself to a single answer. For before the question, Why ought I to be moral? there comes the question, Why have men in general been moral? and the answer to that from the point of view of evolution is necessarily three-fold, if not manifold, for the motives of right conduct have varied with the varying quality of human excellence. We may see at a glance that the noblest lives on record have been actuated by nothing else than pure love and pity for suffering humanity. But unless evolution has brought individual nature within reach of such motives, they are urged in vain or at least would find but an occasional response in the hearts of the greater portion of mankind. As an actual fact in every-day life it is to personal hopes and fears alone that an appeal can successfully be made.

But there is a still further contradiction between the world and human nature as we find it, and the possibility of that perfection of conduct which high moral theory would demand. Not only is it impossible for the average man to rule his conduct wholly or even mainly through-

out life with reference to the highest possible motive, but, even supposing all the higher motives to be in play to produce a high moral type, the concern of a man may be bounded by too narrow a limit to admit of his conduct being called right from a really legitimate standpoint. It is now an effort not to conceive of patriotism as one of the highest duties of man. Yet it is evident that a man's patriotism must be restrained by a sense of injuries inflicted on other nations, and that we are within mental reach of a period when the morality of an individual will be tested by the extent of the circle of humanity which his sympathies comprise. At present it is hardly so. Divided into antagonistic centres, humanity cannot at present be regarded as a whole, nor can the majority of individuals effectively shape their course so as to make universal love the real mainspring of their moral action.

Individuals there have been here and there in the history of the world who have, as it were, reached the goal of the tendency of things, and who have striven with a passionate vehemence to urge on their lagging fellow-creatures. But nature will make no leaps; the influence of the most highly developed units upon the mass is scarcely perceptible except here and there in individual lives, while the general movement, depending on causes beyond the reach of such influences, remains apparently unaccelerated. Moral evolution lingers hopelessly behind the passionate desires of her noblest children. Born out of their time with regard to their

immediate surroundings, yet leaving an eternal heritage for posterity, they have summed up the promptings of their own rare nature into a grand moral law, and have sought to commend it to those around. But in vain ; the finer spirits here and there respond ; the rest approve the better and pursue the worse. From the fate of such as these the sad lesson is to be learned that too high as well as too low a moral development but too often brings its doom. The finer moral natures have too often paid the penalty of premature growth, namely, untimely death, or the more terrible penalty of isolation in the midst of that humanity, whom they have loved too well, and who leave them to spiritual death, beating their souls against the bars of their unfeeling world-prison.

Yet no fate can rob their life of its eternal significance. All the great teachers of mankind are but examples of that perfection which nature can produce even from an unperfected mould, and therefore an earnest of her future handiwork, grand isolated instances of that type which evolution, becoming conscious in man, pronounces to be the highest which imagination can conceive, or the birth-throes of a universe produce.

But we are here dealing with the average rather than the exceptional man, with the individual in the course of moral preparation rather than as perfected. If a place is to be found for the exceptional man in theory, his rule of conduct cannot be made generally binding in practice. Out of the contradictory phenomena of self-sacrifice and self-seeking, of generous impulse and

utter meanness, of hatred and love, moral philosophy has hitherto endeavoured to form, not a consistent scheme of evolution, which is possible, but a single principle of conduct for the guidance of every separate individual, which is impossible. Primarily, an individual is antagonistic in his own interests ; secondarily, in the interests of others. In theory, a man's altruism includes the whole world ; while, as a matter of fact, its realization is impossible between antagonistic social sections. Again, in theory such altruism comprises all within the limits of the social organism of which he is a member, while in reality its operation is suspended between the various contending combinations which make up the sum total of a nation. Finally, such larger combinations are liable to subdivision ; for, as has been shown, the claims of family are regarded as warranting a species of antagonism against the rest of the social body. Under these circumstances, it is impossible to lay down an invariable rule for right action, which must largely consist, in such cases, of a compromise between duty to the whole world and duty to the smaller combination. Such being the facts, it is untrue to say that men in the past have regulated their action by any one given rule, though the necessities of moral education compel us to say that they ought to do so in the present. By rigid insistence on some one feature of moral evolution, and by the elevation of the principle which it is found to contain into a rule of life, scientific systems may be founded satisfactory to their propounders. But the

practical use of such systems will necessarily differ with the difference in individual requirements and character, and cannot be universally acceptable, even to those advanced moral characters who have not only perceived the logical necessity of maintaining the same moral standard in every department of life, but who also—a much greater step—proceed to carry this principle into execution. To the average man they are but imperatives apparently binding in moments of reflection, to be forgotten whenever such a man enters the active phases of social existence. While, again, even the man who is accessible to the very highest and noblest influences cannot, in the course of a lifetime, help owing a large part of his moral excellence to considerations of the crudest utility.

Of wrong action in progressive communities, we may say that the cause is generally misdirected antagonism, either individual or combined. But it is evident that this explanation will not account for all wrong action, for there are many kinds of wrong action into which questions of antagonism do not enter. We have seen reason to conclude that the fundamental notion of right and wrong is respect for the individuality of others. But there is a further requisite of morality, and one which seems originally to take the precedence of respect for the individuality of others, and that is respect for the individuality of self. As we have had reason to infer, from the examination of the difference between progressive and non-progressive nations, there is an alterna-

tive more dangerous to the future of mankind than many of the most pronounced forms of antagonism, namely, bodily and mental inactivity exaggerated by sensual indulgence. A self-interest which disregards others ranks higher than a self-indulgence which disregards even the interest of self. Unscrupulous ambition ranks higher than drunkenness. To form the highest morality, care of self and care of others must necessarily be combined ; failing this, reckless disregard of self ranks lower than a moderate disregard of others. For if a man is absolutely careless of his own interest, not through care of others, but through utter indifference to anything but selfish pleasures, he is also of necessity absolutely careless of the interests of others. To the man whose own share of human existence is of so little importance as to be recklessly squandered on the enjoyment of the passing hour, the shares of other people usually appear of less importance still.

This deficiency of individual character, however, as it necessarily removes the possessor out of the real struggle for existence and the real course of the world's history, has had no place in the present work, and can be legitimately passed over with a mere reference to its existence. For it is to the more active and vigorous forms of wrong action that the attention of the evolutionist is necessarily directed.

Into further details as to the correspondence or contradiction between the ordinary forms of moral reasoning and the results of the present inquiry it is unnecessary

to proceed, for such results are to be tested by comparison, not with the complex outcome of the metaphysical reasoning of this or that moralist, nor with whatever educational moral system may seem most logical and cogent, but with the facts of history and the facts of human emotion as they appear in history. For whether the explanation here attempted stand or fall before such a criticism, it is the only legitimate criticism which can be passed on moral science, as distinguished from moral art.

Though this work disclaims any intention of inculcating moral principle, yet even the enunciation of an abstract moral theory has its practical moral tendencies. If, in the foregoing chapters, the presentation of the world as one vast arena of conflict is calculated to startle cultivated modern aspirations, it must at the same time be remembered that this conflict has been shown, in the case of nations, to possess a nobility which, however mistaken, is yet filled with a touching pathos ; and, in the case of individuals, to lead eventually to moral heights where antagonism is transformed, and in the shape of emulation serves as the willing agent of love.

If attention has been directed to the fact of man's inhumanity to man, it must be allowed that this is no new feature, but, under the form of the origin and existence of evil, has been the problem which has wrung the heart of all who have ever loved their fellow-men. What, on the contrary, may be justly claimed is to have pointed out that the element of nobility, which under other systems cannot be regarded as anything more than an

accident of conflict, is rather seen to be a necessary accompaniment. If conflict has been laid down as a law, self-sacrifice has been laid down as a law too, following necessarily in the train of the great facts of human existence and relationship. And if it seem that the grandeur of human action is dwarfed by the reduction of moral principle to the sphere of positive law, there is the old moral to be drawn, that, after all, theories have but little effect on conduct. To the actors on life's great stage, between the rising and the falling of the curtain of eternal night, who or what has set their parts matters not one whit to the perfect and harmonious acting of their drama.

It is, however, idle to discuss in any way individual action as the basis of the future amendment of mankind, so long as the fury of war still rages unchecked, and the morality of nations continues to mock the efforts after peace of the individuals who compose them ; and as this work opened with an inquiry into the morality of nations, it is with a word upon the same subject that it must end. Perhaps even now the future of the world is trembling in the balance, for with all our progress the gigantic armaments of European nations still increase. What hope have we, then, of the cessation of this evil ?

The conditions necessary for an improved international morality would seem to be nothing less than that the majority of existing nations should have simultaneously arrived at that period when peaceful pursuits are nationally held in honour. Otherwise any one nation,

by excessive addiction to such pursuits, is merely disarming and placing itself at the mercy of its foes. But it is not hard to perceive, from the general tone of the public opinion of nations, that mankind is at present far from any such realization of universal peace. The instinctive respect and fear which is felt for any well-equipped and warlike nation is too well defined to admit of any hopes of the speedy cessation of war. While commerce and industrial pursuits are everywhere meeting with increased attention, while the material improvements in well-being effected by science are emphasizing the blessings of peace, there is still a great consciousness that in the last resort an appeal to arms is always inevitable, and that the triumphs of science will go for nothing, unless, indeed, they have been achieved in the national armoury. This contingency, ever overhanging the immediate future, is fearfully repressive to the extension of the arts of peace, and is in this way infinitely more disastrous to the progress of the world than by any material absorption and misdirection of wealth which it may cause.*

To estimate the immense difficulty which lies in the way of any attempt to smooth the world's course, and to measure in some degree the intensity of national antagonism, we have but to watch the influence upon international relations of the best accredited agent in the improvement of individual morality. It is thoroughly characteristic of the confusion of thought which envelops the whole question of international morality, that the

* Hobbes' "*Leviathan*."

anomalous part which religion plays in international conflict passes almost unnoticed. Religion, which so incessantly preaches self-denial in private life, and combats the natural tendency of the individual to undue self-assertion, somehow stops dead when nation rises against nation. Instead of advancing as an impartial mediator into the gap which separates the contending armies, or, failing that, of retiring discomfited from the presence of human wickedness, religion frankly accepts the necessity of deadly international struggle, assumes a new function the very opposite of its accredited character, busies itself on either side in endeavouring by prayer and supplication to propitiate the god of battles, and concludes by adding a fanatical belief in the single righteousness of their cause to exaggerate the fury of the combatants. That the passions of mankind, when internationally aroused, should be strong enough to clothe religion in the garb of a partisan, and sweep it onward in their service, is a terrible testimony to the inherent strength and blindness of this fatal instinct of antagonism. Religious as well as moral sentiment is subordinate to that change which works upon human beings when they shift from an individual to an international standpoint. Whatever its influence in restraining the consequences of individual misunderstanding, internationally religion relinquishes its functions as the ally of justice and forgiveness, and catches the spirit of national fury—cruel, self-asserting, and bloody. Changing with the changeable nature of man, it is transformed to an influence

whose hideous part it is to invest organized slaughter with all the sweetest attributes of duty to God and man.*

It may be thought that, in dwelling upon the enormities of war and the powerlessness of religion to prevent its catastrophes, there has been an omission of much that has been done to mitigate its evil in the matter of the treatment of the wounded, and in the amenities which have been introduced into what international lawyers term the regulated violence of war. But, as a matter of fact, the advance that has been made in this direction has been comparatively small since the beginning of history. From the earliest times slavery has begun to operate as a mitigation of the death-sentence of prisoners, and, except among the most barbarous tribes, the conquered have always been allowed to remove their wounded and their dead. Though all may be allowed which has enthusiastically been written upon this advance in the treatment of the sick and wounded, though the deepest gratitude and reverence is due to Florence Nightingale and those who by their efforts have increased the growing total of human sympathy, yet civilization, if she smiles with one aspect, frowns still more horribly with another.

When we turn from this advance in humanity to the other features which civilization has introduced, the contrast is enough to shock any but a sensibility like our own, dulled and blunted by the anomalies that per-

* It has been left for the Society of Friends to set the religious world an example of its duty in this matter.

vade the world of morals. It would most naturally seem to one ignorant of the facts of the case that this advance in after-battle morality must have been accompanied by a corresponding mitigation in the use of violence, and it would doubtless seem a gross and impossible contradiction that the same civilization which has ameliorated the sentiment of mankind, should yet, by a devilish ingenuity, have increased their mutual slaughter by tens of thousands. Yet such is the case. If progress has advanced us somewhat in this after-battle sentiment, it has also placed the discoveries of science at the disposal of mankind, wherewith to increase the horrors perpetrated in the satisfaction of a barbarous instinct. We have at least, in this case, the terrible consolation that this application of science to the destruction of life quickens the perception of the disastrous consequences of war. Each fresh intention hastens the anti-climax ; the sublimity and absurdity of wholesale destruction are daily nearing one another. Year by year, after each civilized campaign, the effect is more far-reaching ; and the fierce exultation of the Spartan mother over the body of her warrior son is turned to the bitter wail of families who feel half guilty in the consciousness that the national honour is no compensation for their individual bereavement, for the voice that is heard no more.

One of the most fatal objections to the belief in the eventual harmony of the world is the permanence throughout history of national types. Though different

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One of the most fatal objections to the belief in the eventual harmony of the world is the permanence throughout history of national types. Though different

nations are continually rising, clashing, fusing, disappearing, yet this only seems to show that though individual nations may pass away nationality is a permanent feature. The low organic type of the social organism is perceptible in this, that, given conditions for their separate maintenance, new social organisms can be indefinitely formed by the mere separation of a part from the original stock, and no sooner are these social organisms formed than the laws of the organic world necessitate their antagonism; while, finally, causes calculated to produce such separations are continually present. The phenomena of political parties, religious sects, civil wars, all prove how terribly speedy may be the formation of what are practically separate nations except for the want of certain conditions. In such case affinity of ideas is a stronger tie than blood-relationship, and sets the latter fact at defiance. It is merely the want of geographical conditions which prevents the invariable birth of a new nationality from the throes of civil war. It is this tendency of even a united people to divide into antagonistic sections, bound together by affinity of ideas and beliefs, which precludes the possibility of the union of the whole world taking place, as the union of smaller portions of it has taken place, through subordination to a common power. It is not possible that any force should ever exist capable of such organization as to include within its jurisdiction the whole of even the civilized world, and of such omnipotence as to militate successfully against the tendency to break up into smaller antagonistic combinations.

Such, if we are to face them without any attempt at suppression, are the difficulties in the way of international advance. But troubled as the outlook may appear, yet the anticipation of a time which will bring a more reasonable approach to the conditions of happiness, though frequently regarded as a myth begotten by a vague yearning of the human heart, more often still the subject of open ridicule, may well be, on a sufficiently sweeping survey of moral evolution, more probable of fulfilment than a similar anticipation with regard to individuals would have seemed to the barbarous fore-runners of modern civilization. For there are two tendencies on which we may count to produce the desired change—disappearance of nationality, and the lessening of national antagonism through the triumph of individual principle. As to the disappearance of nationality, though it has been already shown that there is little warrant in the past history of the world for such a hope, yet it is directly contrary to the whole teaching of evolution to suppose that because a certain thing has invariably taken place in past history, it will also invariably take place in future history. The doctrine of the uniformity of nature does not postulate a repeated sameness of process throughout even the same order of phenomena. The reasoning which would disprove the possibility of advance in this matter would equally have disproved the possibility of all the human advance that has ever, as a matter of fact, been made. The thing that has been is not the thing that shall be, except to those

who believe in the fixity of man, the fixity of nature, and, worst of all, the fixity of evil. To believe that disaster is inevitable is the surest way to make it so.

Leaving such terrible fatalism, and turning to the hopes which science holds out, we have ample reason for believing that the antagonistic sections into which mankind is at present divided may assume relations as productive of general happiness as the relations of individuals are productive of national happiness. If individuals have so far modified their more fatally antagonistic propensities as to be in harmony and co-operation with one another, there is equally good reason for believing that the evolution of international morality will take the same course. For, physically speaking, nations are capable of attaining in even a more complete form that identity of interest in the welfare of mankind which constitutes the essence of morality. If a state of perfect morality is a condition of things where no individual has desires which are prejudicial to other individuals, this is a question of harmony of feeling between different organisms, and in this respect the social organism has obviously a final advantage over the individual. For there is this plain difference between nations and individuals—that national distinctions, though in one sense natural growths, are in another sense artificial, and capable of becoming fused, merged, and lost. Nations are not activities bound up inseparably with certain bodily forms, as are individuals; on the contrary, history continually affords instances of national

distinctions being lost by contact with and comprehension in a conquering, or even a conquered, race; and while it is absurd to speak of individuals as becoming one in organic fact, and not merely in a figure of speech, yet that nations may do so is well within the range of sober argument.

It has been shown that the tendency to form antagonistic social centres is unlimited, and that new nations as soon as formed become antagonistic. Yet these which are the most certain of all inductions from past history are already being falsified. For America has shown, in the war between North and South, that the first tendency can be rightly and successfully withstood, and England is following her example. And as to the second induction, that nations as soon as formed become antagonistic, it is already being contradicted by the noble and far-sighted conduct of the English colonies. Though separate nations, they have no wish to parade a new and envious nationality; though, according to history, they should be actuated by the laws of antagonism, they have given place to no such impulse. What has been achieved in one case may be achieved in others, and, even if that section alone of the world remain united which is represented by England and her colonies, the gain will be no small one. If the individual is originally subordinated to the laws of the social organism, yet, as the grasp of abstract principle becomes firmer, does he become more and more, not only part of his own law, but of the law which directs the action of the

body to which he belongs, and can at least determine for the state what shall be its attitude to certain other portions of the world.

A movement is apparent both in England and America, showing that the instinct of antagonism is at least within control. For England is making an earnest attempt to restrict her own action to wars of defence, and America is training citizens to be hardy and energetic without the lust of conquest. On these grounds, then, unless, indeed, fate has ordered that they shall be falsified anew, there is room for the belief that the present distribution of mankind into antagonistic political centres is a passing phase in moral evolution. If this be so, harmony of feeling is more certain between national organisms which are not so much separate existences as arbitrary divisions of a similar whole, than it is between individual organisms which are ever liable to some degree of difference.

Between such distinct individualities as men harmony has been brought about, and evolution may be trusted to have in store still greater achievements. For in international morality we can legitimately anticipate the greatest of all harmony, namely, identity, and the moral difficulty is solved by the disappearance of the very elements which formed the problem.

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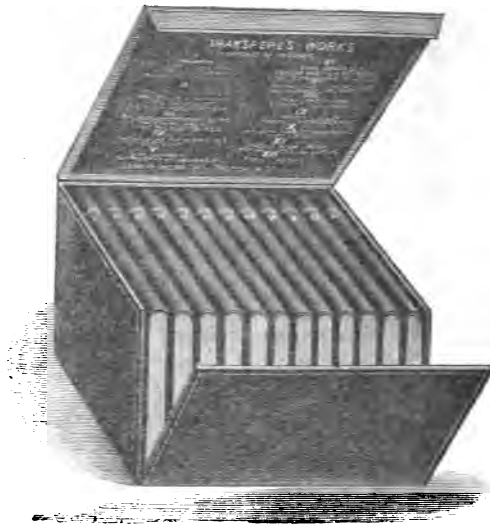
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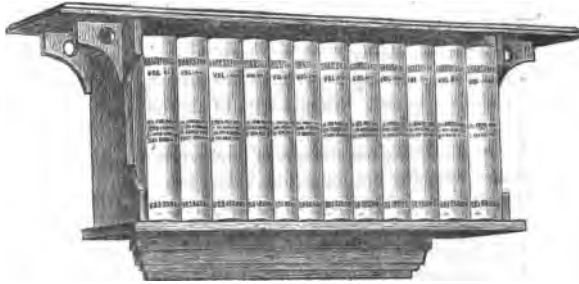
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SPECIMEN OF TYPE.

4

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

ACT I

Salar. My wind, cooling my broth,
Would blow me to an ague, when I thought
What harm a wind too great might do at sea.
I should not see the sandy hour-glass run
But I should think of shallows and of flats,
And see my wealthy Andrew, dock'd in sand,
Vailing her high-top lower than her ribs
To kiss her burial. Should I go to church
And see the holy edifice of stone,
And not bethink me straight of dangerous rocks,
Which touching but my gentle vessel's side,
Would scatter all her spices on the stream,
Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks,
And, in a word, but even now worth this,
And now worth nothing? Shall I have the thought
To think on this, and shall I lack the thought
That such a thing bechanc'd would make me sad?
But tell not me : I know Antonio
Is sad to think upon his merchandise.

Ant. Believe me, no : I thank my fortune for it,
My ventures are not in one bottom trusted,
Nor to one place ; nor is my whole estate
Upon the fortune of this present year :
Therefore my merchandise makes me not sad.

Salar. Why, then you are in love.

Ant. Fie, fie !

Salar. Not in love neither ? Then let us say you
are sad,

Because you are not merry ; and 'twere as easy
For you to laugh, and leap, and say you are merry,
Because you are not sad. Now, by two-headed
Janus,

Nature hath fram'd strange fellows in her time :
Some that will evermore peep through their eyes
And laugh like parrots at a bag-piper ;
And other of such vinegar aspect



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